

# THE SHAKERITE

Nov 4, 2016 // Volume 87 // Issue 2

## The State of Our Schools



The state report card, handed down from the Ohio Department of Education in September, gave the district two Fs and one D among six categories. Now, Shaker teachers, students and community members decide whether we will let that define us. **Page 3**

**Emergency Situations** 14

**Downtown Shaker** 17

**Kaepernick's Influence** 22



# Popping the Shaker Bubble

Why don't we hear about the changes we have yet to make?

NORA SPADONI EDITOR IN CHIEF

I've gone to Shaker since kindergarten. That's 13 years of learning the Shaker way in Shaker classrooms from Shaker teachers, many of whom live in Shaker. I was here before the Chinese craze, before every school was an IB school and before our Pop-Tarts were taken away (and then given back, thankfully).



Shaker, especially the high school, has come a long way in the past decade or so. But, during a September interview I conducted with Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. about the state report card, he asked a question that threw me: Do you feel like you go to an F school?

I don't. With my AP English class I see shows at Playhouse Square; in AP Physics we use advanced software for our experiments; even The Shakerite flies to fancy conferences in New York and Florida. I'm fortunate to be privy to such a wealth of opportunities. But it seems to me that, although the district does continue to focus on its weak spots, Shaker wants the community to hear only about the positives. We celebrate Shaker grads headed to top-ranked universities, we trumpet our IB certifications and brag about our enormous marching band -- and all of that is great. But I think the community should know what the district is doing to help struggling kids in low-level classes, to close the achievement gap and to provide resources to students who need them. I know the district is taking steps to help students who don't have access to the same opportunities as I do, but why don't we hear about them?

I look forward to the day when Shaker can brag about every student in the same way they laud their high-performing students now. We have to first acknowledge our problems, as much as we acknowledge our successes, in order to solve them. I don't expect issues like the achievement gap, which has existed since Shaker schools' inception, to be quickly solved. But I hope that the state report card, despite its many flaws, will open up fresh dialogue about the strides Shaker has yet to take.

## Inside the Issue

3

Campus &amp; City

Editor Julia Barragate examines Shaker's recent **state report card** in comparison with past performance and other districts.

9

Opinion

Despite the growing third-wave feminist movement, **women's studies** classes continue to be scarce in American high schools.

21



15



11

Investigations

Editor Emet Celeste-Cohen investigates student **discipline in Shaker**. Which demographics are most often disciplined?

23

Raider Zone

Editor DC Benincasa argues that **Colin Kaepernick's protest** is disrespectful to the tradition of American patriotism.

**Behind the Cover:** Shakerite Photo Editor Joshua Price observed a lesson on historical figures in Bradley Gillette's third-grade classroom at Onaway Elementary School, Thursday Sept. 29. On the recent state report card, Shaker earned an F for K-3 literacy.

## DRIVING SCHOOL



- It's time to choose a quality driving school for your teenager
- Convenient locations at the Beachwood JCC, Hawken School and Beaumont School
- Mix and Match lessons or locations
- Unbeatable customer service and friendliest driving instructors in town
- Online driving course offered with behind the wheel for convenience

***We don't just teach your driver to pass the test, but to drive safely for their future.***

[www.verbekedriving.com](http://www.verbekedriving.com) • 216-765-0600

Bring in a copy of **The Shakerite** and receive 30 dollars off your purchase!





Students in Bradley Gillette's third-grade class at Onaway Elementary engage in a lesson on historical figures. Although Shaker earned an F for K-3 literacy on the recent state report card, parent Tracy Peebles said that does not concern her. "I have a student who's in second grade and my other two girls have been in those grades and their education has been outstanding, and they have remained outstanding students," she said.

JOSH PRICE/THE SHAKERITE

# SHAKER QUESTIONS STATE RATINGS

**2015-16 state report card results raise questions about district's performance and what the state evaluation really means**

JULIA BARRAGATE CAMPUS AND CITY EDITOR

Despite receiving two F's and one D on the 2015-16 state report card, the district remains committed to its plan to redirect attention to data it says represents Shaker's performance.

There are six major categories of the report card, each representing different areas of achievement and state testing scores. These major categories comprise subcategories, which are also graded.

The district received Fs in the K-3 Literacy Improvement and Gap Closing categories. The district received a D in the Progress component, a C in both Achievement and Prepared for Success sections and a B in the Graduation Rate category.

The grades on this year's report card

have been notably lower than that of previous years. Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings released a statement Sept. 15 on the district website critiquing the inconsistent state testing methods used throughout the past three years.

"The Ohio Department of Education has used three new assessments in three years. With that kind of change, it is inevitable that scores go down. Not only do we have a new assessment every year, but the state's learning objectives and benchmarks have also changed," wrote Hutchings.

In the 2012-13 school year, the state used Ohio Achievement Assessments as a system of evaluation. A transition was made during the 2014-15 school year to Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career assessments.

However, Ohio's membership in the PARCC consortium was short-lived, as a new assessment was developed for evaluation, issued by the American Institute of Research and first issued to students last year.

Though the specific testing method has shifted, the state report cards are dependent upon a district's scores on state assessments.

**"When we hold ourselves to the impossible benchmarks of the ODE, when we hold up illusions as our standards, we not only set ourselves up for failure and recriminations, but we do a real disservice to the kids we want to help."**

CHRIS COTTON

"Anytime a new assessment is implemented, you can look all over the country and you will see that usually there is a drop in scores," said Dr. Terri Breeden, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction.

The overall scores for the Performance Index category, designed to measure how many students scored "proficient" on state assessments, decreased significantly throughout the testing shifts of the past three years.

The number of A's given by the state in this category dropped significantly from the 2013-14 school year to the 2014-15 school year as Ohio public schools transitioned from issuing the OAA's to the PARCC tests.

On the 2013-14 report cards, 37 schools were given A's in the Performance Index category, while only six schools received A's in the same category the subsequent year. Similarly, on the 2015-16 report card, six schools received A's.

Despite this downward trend, Solon City Schools has maintained an A in the "Performance Index" category.

Solon, which earned Ohio's No. 1 school



report for student achievement for the second year in a row, includes a page on its website acknowledging its success on the most recent report card.

"Although scores statewide were down significantly this year due to higher standards on state assessments and more challenging curriculum, Solon students continued to achieve at the highest level in the state," the website states. "Solon's 2016 state report card reflects student knowledge in skills and core content."

However, Executive Director of Public Relations and Communications Scott Stephens said the report card is not reflective of Shaker students' or teachers' abilities. The report card "doesn't reflect the rich, holistic education our students receive in elementary school, middle school or high school," he said.

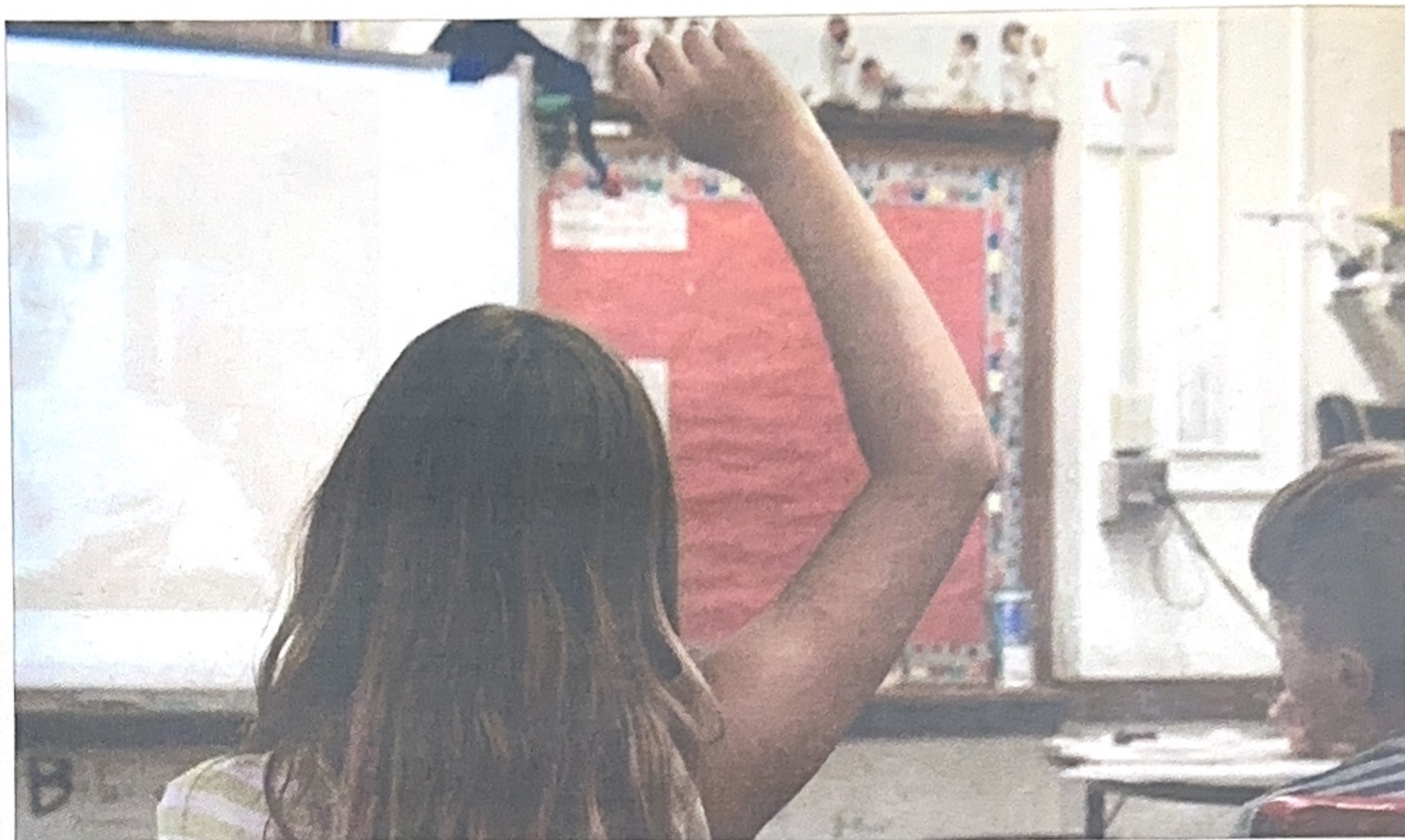
Hutchings also alluded to this idea at the City Club's Oct. 24 Youth Forum on the Education Achievement Gap. "At Shaker Heights, we have a publication called 'Measuring what Matters' and it focuses on not only the academic piece, but also the social, the emotional, the experiences that students have," said Hutchings.

The publication, first released in 2013, includes the headline, "In assessing the quality of a school district, test scores tell only part of the story." The booklet includes statistics on students' music and art participation, community service hours and extracurricular activities.

"I think those are things that right now are not measured on a state assessment, and I think that those are the holistic qualities that are very important to determine if a student is prepared or ready for the world," said Hutchings at the forum.

The state report card includes a "Progress" component, designed to measure the advancement of student scores on state tests. This score, however, does not provide an opportunity for schools to track progress within a year.

According to the ODE, "Up to three years of growth computations are used to assure the accuracy and precision of the measure.



JOSH PRICE/THE SHAKERITE

Despite Receiving an F in K-3 Literacy Improvement, district data shows 99.8 percent of its third graders have met the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

Because of the transition to new assessments only one year of gains will be used to calculate the school, district and teacher ratings in 2016."

The ODE subsequently states, "Just because a school may have a low achievement level in a given year does not mean that students are not learning. In fact, there may be a great deal of academic growth taking place moving students toward academic success."

Hutchings acknowledged this. "When we get the data back from our state assessments, teachers are not able to make informed decisions about that data because the kids are no longer with them, or [results] have been held up or given different release dates," he said. "Because teachers are not able to make informed decisions, it's really not a good tool for educators to progress monitor our kids."

Stephens said administration values their district metrics system, part of Hutchings' five-year strategic initiative plan to

**"We are doing what we've been doing: Every year we assess children very carefully in the components of reading, and our 99.8 percent rate shows that our methods are effective."**

**TERRI BREEDEN**

monitor progress. "The district metrics give our teachers and administrators a road map to determine what we are doing well, and where there are opportunities for growth," said Stephens. "Our metrics use data as a tool for improvement."

Breeden said the district plans to continue with this plan to collect and analyze data that measures improvement. According to Breeden, the district uses a "leading indicators" process. The leading indicators process is part of the district metrics system, which collects student data to display improvement over time.

Breeden explained the district issues Measures of Academic Progress, or MAP assessments, three times a school year to students in third through eighth grade. These assessments contribute to the data collected by administration that comprises the leading indicators program.

Breeden also indicated the district uses some state assessments to measure leading indicators. For example, 93.6 percent of eighth grade Algebra I students scored proficient on the state end-of-course mathematics exam.

In spite of the F assigned to Shaker in the K-3 literacy improvement category, district metrics indicate 99.8 percent of third graders met the requirements by the end of the school year. Breeden explained administration opposes the way the state measures K-3 literacy.

"That is one metric on the state report card that we strongly disagree with," said Breeden. "We had 99.8 percent of our third graders meet that benchmark, and so that is just totally impossible to understand how a district that got a 99.8 could get an F."

"So we are doing what we've been doing: Every year we assess children very carefully in the components of reading, and our 99.8 percent rate shows that our methods are



After the release of the state report card, Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. stressed that community members should remember that it is only one form of measurement. "We need to focus on our district metrics and making sure we're providing a quality learning environment for all of our students, so I don't plan to spend a whole lot of time trying to figure out what the state does and what they plan to do," he said. Photo by Josh Price.



# 2016 Report Card Component Grades

## Graduation



**B** Shaker Heights

**A** Solon

**C** Cleveland Heights

**F** Cleveland Municipal

## Gap Closing



**F** Shaker Heights

**B** Solon

**F** Cleveland Heights

**F** Cleveland Municipal

## Achievement



**C** Shaker Heights

**A** Solon

**D** Cleveland Heights

**F** Cleveland Municipal

## Progress



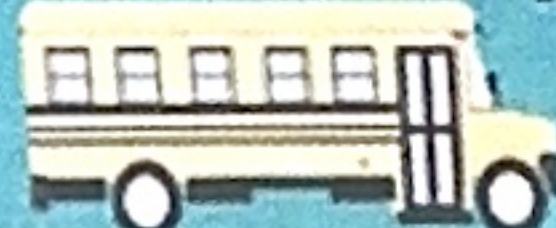
**D** Shaker Heights

**A** Solon

**F** Cleveland Heights

**F** Cleveland Municipal

## K-3 Literacy



**F** Shaker Heights

**NR** Solon

**C** Cleveland Heights

**F** Cleveland Municipal

## Prepared for Success



**C** Shaker Heights

**A** Solon

**D** Cleveland Heights

**F** Cleveland Municipal

Shaker parent Tracy Peebles said the K-3 Literacy Improvement grade does not concern her. "I have a student who's in second grade, and my other two girls have been in those grades, and their education has been outstanding," she said.

English teacher and Shaker Heights Teachers' Association Member Chris Cotton expressed his views in an Oct. 17 editorial published on Facebook. "But when we hold ourselves to the impossible benchmarks of the ODE, when we hold up illusions as our standards, we not only set ourselves up for failure and recriminations, but we do a real disservice to the kids we want to help," wrote Cotton.

Cotton later acknowledged his purpose for writing the editorial, saying, "I just wanted to throw my two cents in and try to tell parents, 'Don't be fooled by this kind of thing. This is meaningless.'"

Of all the report card scores, Shaker's F in the Gap Closing category stands out, given Hutchings' frequent assertion that if anyone can close the gap, Shaker can.

The Gap Closing category uses state testing results to evaluate the achievement gap. "We don't need the state report card to tell us that we have an achievement gap. We've known that, we have been working to correct that," said Stephens, who explained that closing the achievement gap is a part of Hutchings' five-year strategic initiative, and progress is measured using the district metrics system.

The district metrics program includes data that measures the educational achievement gap. The data proves that an achievement gap is present before students begin school. The district evaluation of kindergarten readiness for the 2015-16 school year, which indicates there is a 48.4 percent gap between the performance of white students and African-American students.

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association President and English teacher John Morris said he believes this evaluation "makes it feel like a race that we can never win, unless we can do things like provide neonatal care to level out all of the enrichment opportunities kids have before they get to school and outside the school day." He added, "We don't live in that world right now."

Community members urge the consideration of alternate measures of success to state testing. "I think you have to measure education in the same way we measure everything else, in terms of the outcome," said Peebles. "We send our kids to school and we see how they come through the district and do such amazing things; and they're so engaged in critical thinking and looking at the world as a whole. You have to look at how students are as individuals in this world; you can't just look at these standardized tests."

Investigations Editor Astrid Braun and Campus and City Reporter Ellie Vahey contributed reporting.

effective."

According to the Ohio Department of Education, "Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee aims to ensure all students are reading at grade level by the end of third grade. The guarantee drives attention to students from kindergarten to third grade who are struggling readers and makes sure they get the help they need to succeed in reading."

The state report card's "K-3 Literacy" component, however, is not based on the quantity of students who meet this guaran-

tee, but on the district's ability to assist students who are reading below grade level to reach the requirement.

Stephens said parents should not be concerned about the grade. "I can certainly see where there would be concern about the score," he said. "But we do not believe it reflects what goes on in our elementary schools. A child reading at grade level in the third grade is the gold standard for academic progress, and virtually all our third-graders are there."

GRACE LOUGHEED//THE SHAKERITE



# But, What if It Happens During Lunch?



Assistant Principal Ramsey Inman described the protocol for a lockdown situation, explaining that "people located in the Upper Cafeteria will be guided to walk down the center cafeteria stairway and directed to stay in the Lower Cafeteria sitting area and kitchen area. Security staff will secure the doors, barricade if possible, and make sure the students sitting on the patio or lawn are alerted and escorted to safety. The remaining parts of the protocol are similar to the classroom lockdowns."

MADI HART//THE SHAKERITE

## The high school has never staged emergency drills during lunch periods, but this year, cafeteria protocol is on the menu

JULIA BARRAGATE CAMPUS AND CITY EDITOR  
ELLIE VAHEY CAMPUS AND CITY REPORTER

Before graduating from Shaker Heights High School, students may have participated in 36 fire drills, 12 lockdown drills and eight tornado drills.

Not one of them during lunch.

And, until this year, not one of those monthly, quarterly or semiannual emergency evacuation or sheltering rehearsals occurred during first period, either.

To address these gaps in annual emergency preparation, administrators plan to begin holding drills during lunch this year. They have already held a fire drill during first period, which is rarely used for drills.

"This is an effort to prepare the Shaker Heights High School community for emergencies that could happen at any point in the day," said Assistant Principal Ramsey Inman, emergency drill coordinator.

Wayne Johnson, Shaker Heights assistant fire chief, said the fire code recommends varying drill times.

"Trying to meet the needs within the school day and fire code requirements, it'd be up to the school how to balance all those conflicts," he said.

Fire, tornado and lockdown drills have not been conducted during lunch periods because students lose time to eat. "Lunchtime drills have been debated in the learning community because they could possibly interfere with students getting the nourish-

ment that they need," Inman said.

Despite debates, the district aims to hold emergency drills during lunch. "Under the advisement of the Shaker Heights Fire Department and Shaker Heights Police Department, there will be lunchtime safety drills conducted this year," Inman said.

"Depending on how long the drill takes, there will be adjustments to the lunch schedule if needed. Teachers will be notified immediately of changes to the schedule, and that students may be arriving to their next period class a few minutes late," he said.

"School administrators will be available to assist students that need additional time to eat, or even in obtaining food. After the drill, the goal is to make sure everyone receives the opportunity to eat, transitions back to teaching and learning in their classrooms," he continued.

Sophomore Day'sha Martin said lunchtime safety drills should be conducted. "If they're really concerned about our safety, they should do it," said Martin. "They do it during class while we're learning, so they should do it while we eat."

Ohio Revised Code is codified legislation enacted by the Ohio General Assembly, published in the Laws of Ohio.

Ohio Revised Code 3737.73 requires schools without smoke systems in each classroom to hold nine fire drills, three lockdown drills and two tornado drills yearly. According to Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations Stephen Wilkins,

**"Fires can happen anytime. It's a lot more orderly if we're all in classrooms and can file out the doors like we've been practicing for years, but fires are not always cooperative."**

JONATHAN KUEHNLE

the state does not specify what time drills must occur.

Principal Jonathan Kuehnle said holding fire drills throughout the day is essential to maximizing student safety. "Fires don't follow our schedules. You can't just tell a fire, 'Don't burn now; wait 'til 2:15.' Fires can happen anytime," he said.

"It's a lot more orderly if we're all in classrooms and can file out the doors like we've been practicing for years, but fires are not always cooperative."

Ohio Revised Code states, "No principal or person in charge of a public or private school or educational institution having an average daily attendance of twenty or more pupils ... shall willfully neglect to instruct and train such children by means of drills or rapid dismissal, so that such children in a sudden emergency may leave the building in the shortest possible time without confusion."

Sophomore Milla Costa said she is unaware of the emergency situations protocol in the cafeteria.

"We've never done a drill in the cafeteria, so how are we supposed to know what to do?" Costa asked.

In the case of an emergency during lunchtime, security guards would assist students with safety procedures. Head Security Monitor Mark Seymore said there are three to four security guards upstairs and two downstairs. Security guards are to follow protocol and assist students to safety.



"Security staff and administrators have recently collaborated with the Fire Marshal and Shaker Heights Police Department to review and assess the safety procedures in the cafeteria and other places of the school besides the classroom," he said.

Other locations in the building such as the library and the auditorium also require a different procedure. "Librarians and teachers that utilize the auditoriums and gymnasiums have successfully helped to conduct every type of safety drill," Inman said.

The protocol for emergencies outside the classrooms is slightly different than inside the classrooms. Seymore indicated that security guards would have a "double responsibility" if an emergency were to occur during lunchtime. "It's pretty much the same protocol, but we have more responsibility to get the kids clear of the building and check the classrooms," he said.

In the case of a lockdown, Inman explained that "security staff will secure the doors, barricade if possible, and make sure the students sitting on the patio or lawn are alerted and escorted to safety. The remaining parts of the protocol are similar to the classroom lockdowns."

Wilkins said if a fire were to occur during a lunch period, normal protocol would be followed. "The school would follow the fire evacuation procedure," he said, "Similar to teachers, the security monitors would assist to direct students to the nearest exit."

However, with hundreds of students in each lunch period, and only five exit doors in the cafeteria, students predict a smooth exit would be difficult.

Sixth period lunch enrollment is 774 students this semester, with the maximum capacity of the cafeteria at 800. Fourth period, however, holds 306 students first semester.

The second semester numbers reach closer to maximum capacity, with 785 students scheduled to eat sixth period. Fourth period lunch holds 303 students, and 507 students are scheduled to eat eighth period.

Costa explained leaving the cafeteria after her lunch period is difficult. "Exiting lunch regularly is very crowded and it takes a lot of time to get out," she said.

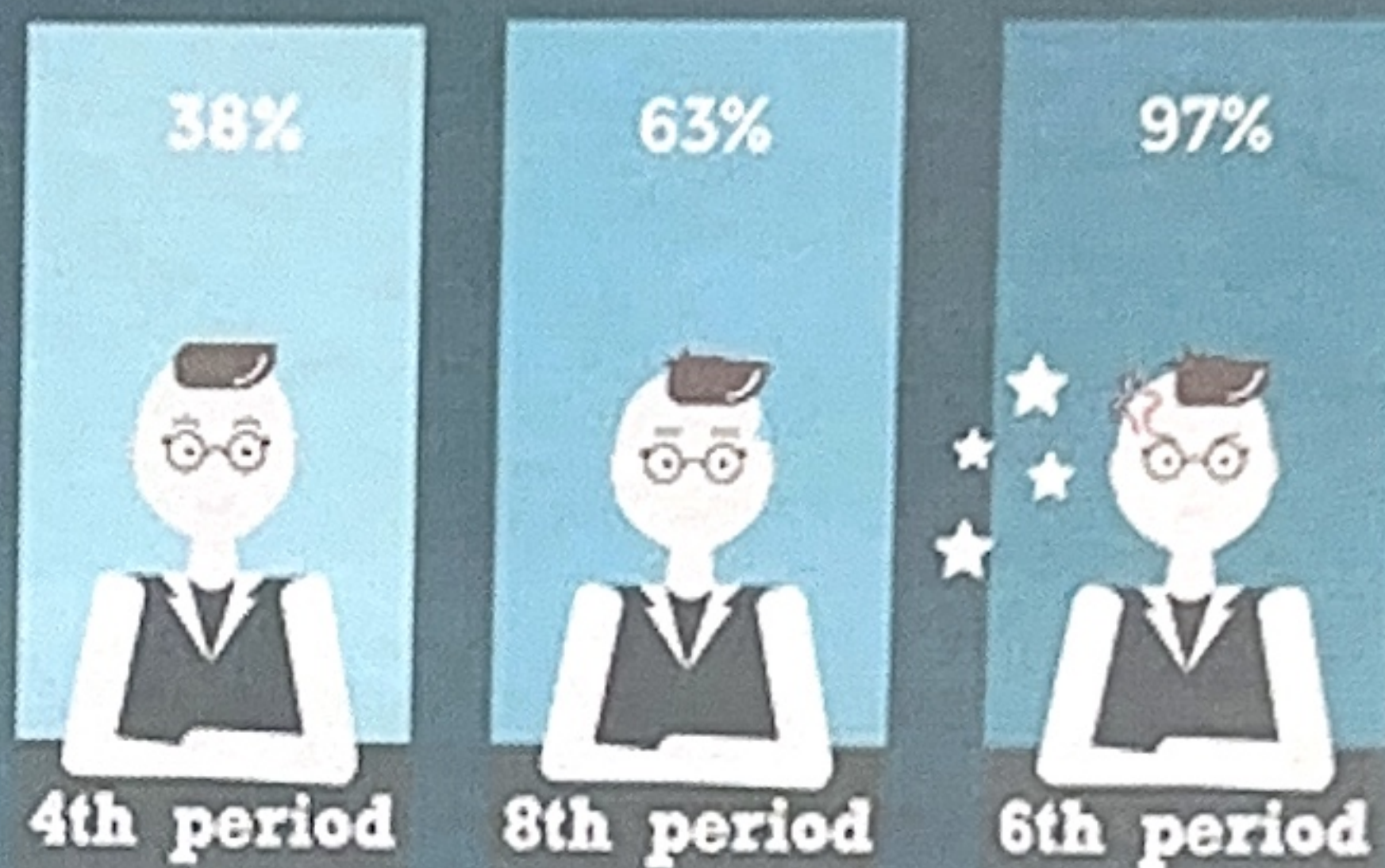
Freshman Jordan Green described his lunch period as "a zoo," and said he would "absolutely not" be able to exit efficiently.

Upperclassmen are permitted to eat lunch off campus, and because attendance isn't taken during lunch periods, an issue of accountability arises. With no way of knowing which students leave the school during lunch, there's no count of evacuated students.

Kuehnle said he plans to communicate with students about emergency procedures during lunch periods. "We're going to facilitate tabletop conversations with students," he said. "And we will be practicing [drills during lunch time] because, again, safety is the most important thing."

Campus and City Reporter Abigail Aronoff contributed reporting.

## Predicted Capacity of High School Cafeteria Second Semester



GRACE LOUGHEED/THE SHAKERITE

### Wayne Johnson, assistant chief, Shaker Heights Fire Department

**Q:** Should there be fire drills during lunch periods?

**A:** "The fire code does state that you should not do [drills] at the same time, each and every time. It recommends that you should vary the times, which I would be in agreement with. You try to balance that without interrupting other options in the school day."

**Q:** Should a cafeteria filled with 785 students that has a maximum capacity of 800 students be a concern?

**A:** "Well, then, you're in compliance. You could theoretically put 15 more people in there. Various rooms, especially with a larger occupancy, are calculated based on fire code regulations. It should be considered safe- provided all exits are operating and opening as they should be."

**Q:** How can we ensure students make the quickest and most efficient exit possible during a fire?

**A:** "There should be maps showing exit routes in all the classrooms. The [exits] are flexible. We've helped the schools in the past when they've noticed that during the drills, one of the exit doors is [overwhelmed]. That's why exit routes change sometimes, so they can balance the occupants."



# EpiPen Prices Prove Greed Surpasses Need



JOSHUA PRICE/THE SHAKERITE

Since Mylan Pharmaceuticals bought EpiPen from Merck AGaG, the price has gone from \$94 to \$500, an increase of more than 500 percent. The change caused outcry among those who rely on EpiPens.

## For Mylan Pharmaceuticals, there's no such thing as too much money

**S**orry, Marilyn Monroe, but diamonds are not an allergenic girl's best friend. Contrarily, my EpiPen and I are quite close. For 16 years we've traveled every-

Emily Montenegro  
Opinion Editor

where together: across the globe, across the street, across the room to the peanut-free table in elementary school. I can't go anywhere without my constant companion, no matter what accessory I choose for its transportation.

Since my EpiPen is the difference between life and death by anaphylactic shock, one might consider our relationship priceless. Unfortunately, my friend costs a whopping \$600.

"EpiPen" is the cute, pronounceable abbreviation for epinephrine auto-injector. Its full title sounds intimidatingly important -- probably because it is. This drug, about the size and shape of a snowman's carrot nose, combats anaphylactic allergic reactions to allergens ranging from shellfish to bee stings. If I were to have one of these extreme reactions, I would immediately pull the blue safety and stab the

EpiPen into my thigh for an excruciating 10 seconds. Otherwise, I would be unable to breathe until an ambulance arrived. Those 10 seconds are crucial for my survival, but they're barely affordable anymore.

When Mylan Pharmaceuticals bought EpiPen from Merck AGaG in 2007, the drug cost \$93.88. Because the new owner holds more than 90 percent of the share of the U.S. EpiPen market, it has been able to steeply raise the price by more than 500 percent. The U.S. grants monopolies to pharmaceutical companies and allows them to set their own prices, without restriction. But, if Mylan Pharmaceuticals thought they could gradually raise the price without raising eyebrows, they were mistaken. The media pounced on this price spike like it did to the recent Brangelina divorce coverage. For the first time I can remember, my allergy and others just like it were making headlines. The nightly news was talking about that weird plastic thing in my purse and its necessity -- one that my nonallergenic friends might never fully comprehend. There was nationwide distress about my life-saving medicine, something I'd never bothered to explain to others because it didn't affect them. It was awful, discovering the exorbitant amounts my parents paid for something I hope I never need to use. Yet, there was something extremely gratifying about the attention EpiPens and Mylan Pharmaceuti-

**Since my EpiPen is the difference between life and death by anaphylactic shock, one might consider our relationship priceless.**

cals received.

At the 2016 Emmy Awards, Jimmy Kimmel's mother supposedly made thousands of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the celebrity audience members. Recognizing the nut allergies in the room, Kimmel joked, "If you're allergic to peanuts, well, I guess this is goodbye, because we can only afford one EpiPen." My jaw hit the floor when the audience laughed. The joke was hilarious, but I was shocked that even my favorite celebrities knew about Mylan Pharmaceuticals' unjust prices. There may have been a handful of celebrities who actually had their own EpiPens, but it's clear the price outrage is bigger than just the EpiPen market. If Mylan Pharmaceuticals can get away with jacking their prices sky high, where does it end?

Thanks to the media's thorough coverage and the public's refusal to back down, the company has released a savings card that reduces the prices by as much as 300 dollars. The savings card is sufficient to finance up to six EpiPen 2-Pak cartons. That's still almost three times the amount they cost in 2007, and their current cost in Canada, but it's a step in the right direction. Maybe someday, my buddy EpiPen and I will have a truly priceless relationship. Until then, we hope Mylan Pharmaceuticals is listening.

Hear more from Editor Emily Montenegro at [shakerite.com](http://shakerite.com).



# Shaker's Next Step in Diversity: Women

Emma Duhamel, co-president of Women's Studies Club, reads to clubmembers from a book about feminism. "The goal of the club is to help promote and educate on women's history and women's issues through discussion," she said.



## Students form club to address lack of Women's Studies in curriculum

EMILY MONTENEGRO OPINION EDITOR

From the first day of kindergarten to the principal's commencement speech, Shaker's students and community hear the same, proud message: Shaker Heights is diverse. It's true -- the community is a beautiful mix of cultures, races and backgrounds. Shaker Heights High School reflects its multicultural community by offering unique courses. The high school offers six language courses, as well as African-American History and Asian Studies courses. Students are fortunate to see so much of the student body represented in Shaker's lengthy course list, but said list lacks a course about half of the world's population.

Where is Shaker's Women's Studies course?

Shaker sophomore English classes spend a few measly weeks barely scratching the surface of women's literature. Students analyze and recite poems they will quickly forget. Repressed memories of reading Charlotte Brontë freshman year briefly re-surface until the necessary bullet points are checked off and the curriculum moves on to another male author. History classes are sure to include handfuls of women whom the textbook authors deem historically significant, perhaps devoting a short unit to discuss Harriet Tubman or a day championing Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

In a world where a major political party has elected a female nominee, these minis-

cule chunks of curriculum will not suffice. Political views aside, students are witnessing Hillary Clinton and other powerful, influential women make history around the world. They deserve to learn about the strong female individuals who came before these groundbreaking women.

Women's Studies is often regarded as a collegiate Social Science course, which can include women's history, gender studies and other topics. However, more than a few dozen high schools offer it, according to the Women's Media Center. As a school that prides itself on diversity, inclusion, representation and exceptional education, our lack of a Women's Studies class is confusing.

Before adding a Computer Science course to the curriculum for the 2016-2017 school year, 2015 Interim Principal James Reed III said, "I believe that Shaker is on the cutting edge of a lot of different academic offerings for its students and this is an appropriate thing for us to offer."

It's true: Shaker is eager to hop on educational trends. High school Women's Studies fits beautifully into this category. As technological advancements continue, women are chipping, cracking and drilling holes straight through the glass ceiling. It's important for current and future generations to learn about modern educational programs.

Schools and students alike can benefit from this opportunity. Shaker prides itself on being "a trailblazer in education excellence," according to the district's website's homepage. Joining the minority of high schools offering a Women's Studies course would certainly blaze an excellent educa-

**Political views aside, students are witnessing Hillary Clinton and other powerful, influential women make history around the world. They deserve to learn about the strong female individuals who came before these groundbreaking women.**

tional trail for Shaker students to follow. Whether implemented as a semester or year-round course, AP or IB, HL or SL, Honors or no credit at all, the necessity of Women's Studies remains. Not to mention, having any Women's Studies course would brighten Shaker's torch.

Emma Duhamel, a junior, has already lit this proverbial flame. Her Women's Studies Club meets Fridays after school. "The goal of the club is to help promote and educate on women's history and women's issues through discussion," Duhamel said in an interview.

"We use the same material that's used in college women's studies courses to make sure people hear the whole story," she added.

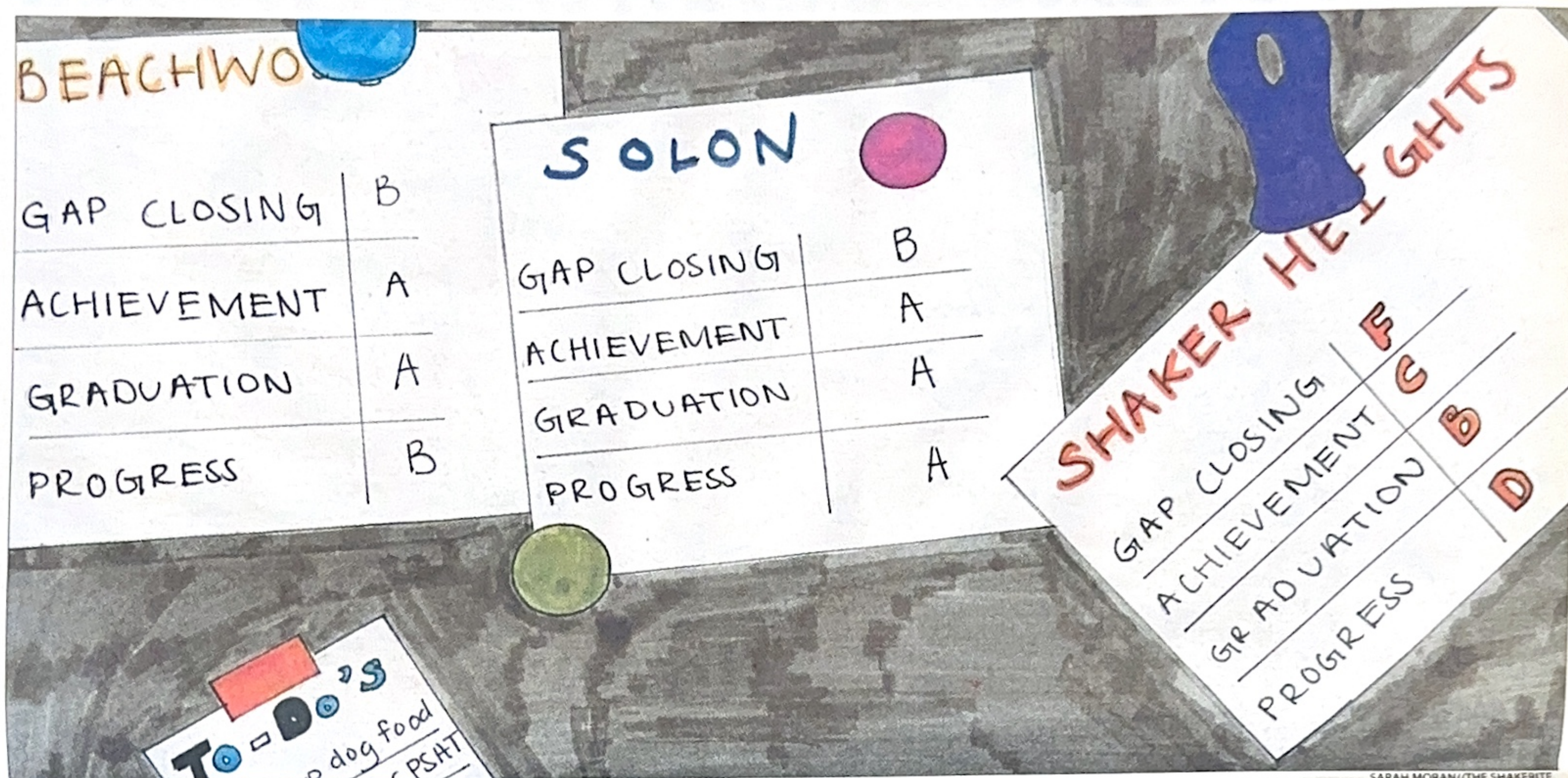
The club's future plans include incorporating social justice work through volunteering and fundraising around the Cleveland area.

On the subject of a Women's Studies course being admitted to the Shaker curriculum, Duhamel and other club founders, including juniors Meredith Modlin, Hunter Fieseler and Julia Shin, all hope that it will be. "Part of the reason we decided to work for over six months on developing the club is because we saw a way to compensate where things were lacking," Duhamel said.

Women's history is too important to be ignored, and Shaker's students deserve to be fully represented. If we can pull the funds together to add a computer science program, then we can surely do the same for the women of our history. Bring women's studies to Shaker Heights High School.



# IT COMES DOWN TO TRUST IN THE END



SARAH MORAN/THE SHAKERITE

## How do we reconcile ODE ratings and Shaker's unique identity?

Whom do we trust? The numbers, which seem so immovable, so concrete because of their quantifiability; the state standards, which constitute a scale for thousands of schools so they must mean something; or the PR flood from our district, which has provided its own numbers for our consumption?

How do we, as students, teachers, parents and community members, decide where to place our trust?

The latter has been answered repeatedly by the district. We were given Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings' opinion piece published on cleveland.com a day prior to the release of our failing report card. In it he said these grades "do a great disservice to our students, our teachers and our schools." Next, we were given the next day's shaker.org post, in which he continued, "one data point—a state assessment administered last year—does not define the quality of our schools." And, just in case we remained unconvinced, we were given the glossy "Measuring What Matters" pamphlet in our mailboxes a week later, featuring the district's concoction of the shiniest numbers, graphs and testimonials it could muster.

We've consumed every piece of filtered data the district has given us, and it's been made clear that if you ask the district, we

should trust them. We've done the same for that provided by the state, consuming their report cards and grades.

We live here. If we aren't ourselves attending its schools every day, our kids are, or we're paying taxes to fund them. We also live in this state. We are undeniably cut from the same cloth as the other 3,585 public schools in Ohio's education quilt.

So, do we take our scissors and cut ourselves out of this quilt? Do we trust that our value exists independent of the state's measures? Or do we put down the scissors and trust that we are just one quilt panel, measured with the same ruler as all the others?

Are we Shaker, or are we Shaker Heights, Ohio?

If we're Shaker, surely we aren't Shaker where every student is high achieving, graduating, college anticipating, extracurricularly committing and A averaging, right? Surely in our definition of Shaker we've been clear to include the Shaker where some students pass, fail, find their niche, are uninvolved, love being here, have never been asked whether or not they do, feel represented and disregarded, right? Surely we've acknowledged the gap, and not just that of achievement, but also the gap between what students see every day at school and the colorful, contrived, beaming snapshots of our students and schools presented by the district.

If we're Shaker Heights, Ohio, we are a socioeconomically disparate Cleveland suburb of 28,000. We are the number 1,382 in

**We are undeniably cut from the same cloth as the other 3,585 public school districts in Ohio's education quilt.**

the national rankings of best high schools. We are the letter F, repeated 13 times, on our 2016 ODE State Report Card. We are the 45.8 percent African-American, 40.2 percent white and 4.2 percent Asian students enrolled in our schools. We are the 36.2 percent economically disadvantaged students, the 15.7 percent with disabilities.

As long as we're sewed into the same quilt as wildly different districts, such as the 14.35 percent African-American, 60 percent white, 18.2 percent Asian, 9.4 percent economically disadvantaged and 9.2 percent with disabilities, nearly straight-A district of Solon, we will never equal their report card. The plight of our district is that the state sees a public school district in Ohio -- Shaker Heights. They do not see a community -- Shaker.

There are no answers to these questions, there is only duality. We are the city of Shaker Heights and the community of Shaker. We are passing students and failing students. We are frustrated about standardized testing and ecstatic about our depth of educational opportunities. We are, whether we validate them or not, the F's on our state report card and we are simultaneously the innumerable and unquantifiable triumphs of our students and staff.

So, whom do we trust?

We trust ourselves, as a school district, and as a community that is not one or the other. Not black or white, not an F or an A, but a school district as multidimensional, flawed and commendable as every student it serves.

**'Rite Idea**



# SUSPENDING STUDENTS AND LEARNING



EMET CELESTE-COHEN/THE SHAKERITE

**Suspensions, expulsions, which affect minority students disproportionately, may contribute to achievement gap**

EMET CELESTE-COHEN INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

Louisa sat down at a desk in a quiet room. Her pencils lay in a line. Her books were arranged in a stack. Her peers were nowhere to be seen.

The week before, she had gone into school, waited until lunch, and pushed another girl into the window. Security guards immediately intervened. They sent her to the office with the threat of suspension, or even expulsion.

Her parents' pleading left her with only a 10-day suspension.

Louisa's anger quickly faded as anxiety set in. "Every day I thought about how my grades would go down," she said, "and how this would affect me in school." But she didn't feel bad about her actions.

Discipline comes in many forms. There are detentions, where students stay after school as punishment. There are in-school suspensions, where students go to school but don't attend their classes. There are out-of-school suspensions, which range from one to 10 days long. Finally, there are expulsions, which allow for the removal of students from school for 20 to 80 days, or until the end of the semester (with some ex-

**"Our goal is to continue a student's education. However, there comes a time when we have to stop that education. We don't want to do that."**

OIUMET SMITH

ceptions).

For school officials, the defining feature of each of these disciplinary actions is the amount of time a student is away from instruction.

Fifty-one years ago, the Shaker Heights Board of Education wrote a district-wide philosophy of discipline.

"The goal of any disciplinary action or counseling is to aid the student in developing self-discipline," states the first of four guidelines.

This summer, Shaker employed Greg Zannelli as dean of students to enforce part of that ideology. "My philosophy is to do what's best for kids and give them the skills to make better choices," he said.

His arrival accompanied new disciplinary procedures for the high school. Zannelli recalled a consensus among assistant principals and administrators for Saturday school, one noticeable addition.

"The last thing we want to do is suspend students, because they'll miss instruction time," Zannelli said. "The data shows that what we're doing should bring down the number of suspensions."

But Zannelli explained that Saturday school is an extension of after-school detention rather than an alternative to suspension. Students sent to Saturday school receive the punishment for detention-level behavior such as having too many tardies or talking back to a teacher. Students caught fighting or participating in another suspen-

sion-level offense will not be sent to Saturday school.

Zannelli believes that suspensions detract from the end goal of education. If students are at home, their teachers cannot provide instruction.

Economics teacher Bryan Elsaesser recognizes that problem, too. "The student who is suspended usually gets way behind," he said. "It's usually not the kid with the A's and B's," he continued. "It's usually the kids who are already struggling anyway, so it makes it really difficult to keep up to date with everything."

On the first day of her suspension, Louisa's father drove her to the Shaker Youth Center. Normally she gets a ride to school with her friends, but on that day, their destinations differed.

Her schoolwork had been ferried from the high school the day before. Tutors awaited her arrival. "They gave us materials and textbooks, and we went to work," she said. But without instruction from her teachers, she quickly became lost.

"Tutors can help you," Louisa said, "but how am I supposed to know what I need help on if I haven't learned it yet?"

Director of Student Affairs Oiumet Smith said the district's goal is to continue a student's education. "However there comes a time when we have to stop that education," he said. "We don't want to do that."

Erin Davies is the executive director of the Juvenile Justice Coalition of Ohio.



The group advocates for children in Ohio's courts. "The one thing we know," she said, "is that out-of-school suspensions and expulsions are extremely ineffective."

"Tiered responses are essential," Davies continued. "Discipline in schools can be as light as a teacher reprimanding a student, all the way up to a student being expelled." She believes that those actions should match the misdeeds of the student.

"There is a spectrum of discipline for students," Smith said. Shaker's tiered responses follow that spectrum. "Zannelli will be responsible for tier-one discipline such as dress code, cell phone and tardiness violations," the district website states. Smith handles appeals for tier-two discipline -- suspensions and expulsions.

Zannelli and Smith both mentioned Shaker's restorative justice practices. Restorative justice aims to reconcile offenders with their communities rather than pursuing purely punitive measures. Instead of detracting from education by sending students home, restorative justice sends them to a therapist or a group sit-down where they can talk about what they did and how it affected others.

In the discipline community, it is agreed that communication brings positive change. "Starting a meaningful dialogue between students and administrators is essential," Davies said.

"It gives students an opportunity to have a voice and share where they're coming from," Smith said. "That dialogue is a good thing."

But Shaker's restorative justice efforts occur in addition to punishment rather than in lieu of it.

Louisa's day at the youth center ended with an hour-long group conversation. Students pulled their chairs into a circle and talked about what they regretted and why they did what they did. Some days they watched a movie about anything from anger management to drug use.

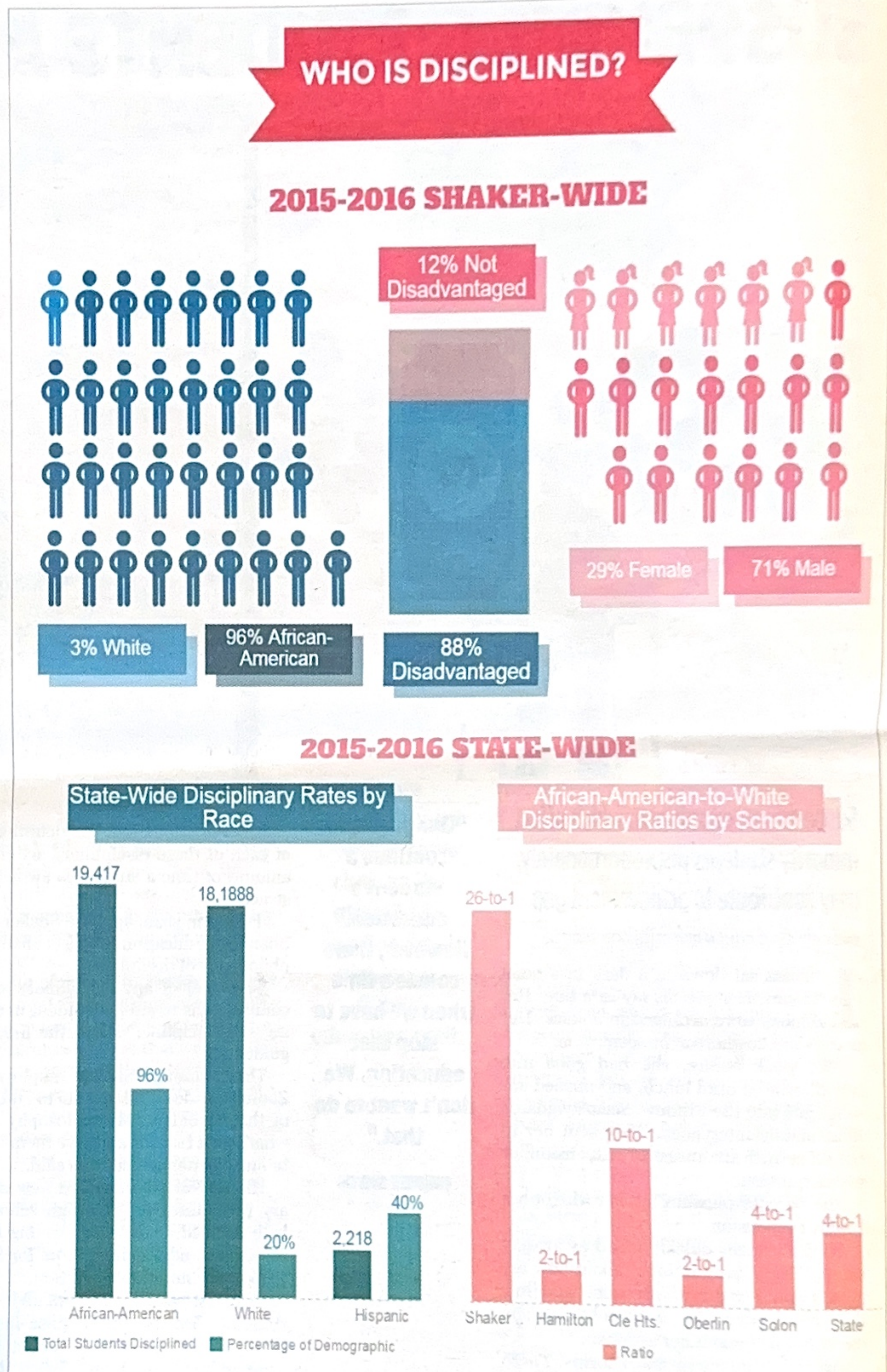
"They would either pick one or two people to talk about their experiences, then we just go around and say something that's relatable to it, and then we would just give each other advice," she said. "I liked it. It was like a therapy session." For her, it was the best part of a long day.

Restorative measures and measured responses are helping. In middle and high school classes in Ohio, there are 33 discipline occurrences per 100 students. At Shaker, that number is 14.

However, a lack of suspensions and expulsions is not the only indicator of successful discipline efforts.

Equity is one of Shaker's three main aspirations according to the district website. African-American students make up 51 percent of enrolled students; they account for 96 percent of the discipline. While white students make up 40 percent of enrolled students, they account for just 3 percent of discipline.

"The numbers aren't good, nationally," Scott Stephens, director of communications, said.



He is right. Although there are five times more white students than African-American students in Ohio public schools, the two groups are disciplined at nearly a 1-to-1 ratio. When expressed as a percentage of the overall demographic, disciplined students thus represent a larger percentage of the African-American student population than the white

student population.

If the same number of African-American and white students were disciplined in one year, that number represents a five-times higher percentage of the African-American student population.

At Shaker, though, the percentage of the African-American student population disci-



plined is 26 times larger than the percentage of the white student population disciplined.

The district often points out its unique features, from being diverse to being one of eight districts nationwide to offer the International Baccalaureate program K-12.

Shaker is one of 10 districts offering the IB Diploma Program in Northeast Ohio. But even in this selective group, Shaker is a disciplinary outlier. The Oberlin City Schools, another IB district, saw twice the number of disciplinary actions in grades 7-12 as Shaker during 2015-16, but that discipline was more evenly distributed than Shaker's. There, only two African-American students were punished for each white one.

An imbalance doesn't just arise when examining African-American versus white students. In Shaker, 278 African-American students are disciplined for each Hispanic student, and 16 for each multiracial student.

Shaker is also part of another group of peer schools. Twenty-eight schools across the nation comprise the Minority Student Achievement Network. These schools collaborate in research with the goal of closing the achievement gap between students of color and their white peers.

"MSAN districts have student populations between 3,000 and 33,000, and are most often well-established, first-ring suburbs or small- to mid-size cities," their website states. "Additionally, the districts share a history of high academic achievement and connections to major research universities."

In this group, Shaker is still an outlier. Cleveland Heights High School, another MSAN member, suspended or expelled a third more students than Shaker last year. But, like Oberlin, suspensions and expulsions occurred evenly across most demographics. Cleveland Heights' ratio of African-American-to-white discipline is just 10 to 1, nearly three times less than Shaker's.

Hamilton Local Schools are in a suburb of Columbus. Their performance index -- a measure of students' performance on OAA's and OGT's -- was 87.83. Shaker's was 87.77.

Hamilton's achievement grade on the state report card was a C. So was Shaker's. Like Shaker, its gap closing and K-3 literacy were both Fs. According to cleveland.com, it is the school most academically similar to Shaker.

But its discipline differs. Hamilton Local Schools saw a 2-to-1 ratio of African-American-to-white students disciplined.

Shaker's subpar performance on parts of the state report card might stem from discipline.

The West Virginia Board of Education spearheaded a study two years ago examining the "impact on student academic performance of referrals for disciplinary intervention." They found a strong correlation between discipline referrals and failure in state math tests. Of students with zero discipline referrals, 42 percent scored not proficient.

After one referral, the number of non-proficient students reached 63 percent -- with a 20 percent separation from those proficient. "This gap increased to about 33 percentage

points when the incidents resulted in suspension," they stated.

If African-American students make up the majority of those disciplined, the West Virginia Board of Education believes they'll make up a majority of those non-proficient on state tests. At Shaker, this connection shows.

Shaker was given an F in the "Gap Closing" category of the state report card.

District wide, African-American students and students with economic disadvantages both scored 35 percent on the math state test. White-students scored on average 86 percent.

When discipline stratifies, so does performance. When gaps in discipline disappear, so do the gaps in performance. Solon City Schools demonstrate this relationship. Their ratio of African-American-to-white discipline was just five-to-one. Their African-American students scored 76 percent on the state math assessment; just 20 percent less than their white students. This success among all demographics increased their performance index to 110.59. Solon also has 13 percent less discipline overall.

"Every educator is aware of this," Smith said. Shaker is making steps to replicate it.

"Implicit bias training is really helpful," Davies said. Implicit bias training is a part of cultural proficiency training that focuses on identifying "subtle cognitive processes" that impact how we view others, especially those of other races.

The Shaker Five-Year Strategic Plan details the implementation of cultural proficiency training over three years. A culturally proficient teacher recognizes students' unique backgrounds and endeavors to relate with them. "It's not walking a mile in their shoes so much as it is just taking a look around from their point of view," Smith said.

The first year, 2014, was meant for train-

**"Discipline in schools can be as light as a teacher reprimanding a student, all the way up to a student being expelled."**

ERIN DAVIES

ing of principals, teachers and "leaders." Last year was for faculty and staff. By the end of this school year, the goal was to have the entire community (including students and parents) culturally proficient to some degree.

"A lot of staff members go to the training," Smith said. "Is it formally set up that they have to? Not necessarily. But they all have the opportunity."

Davies believes these steps are in the right direction.

Whether students are male or female or economically disadvantaged also contributes to the likelihood of suspension and expulsion.

Males at Shaker are disciplined twice as often as females. Students in eighth grade are three times more likely to be disciplined than those in twelfth grade. Those with an economic disadvantage are disciplined eight times as often as those without.

In fact, behind race, economic disadvantage is the most pertinent disadvantage there is, in terms of discipline. And in Shaker, economic disadvantage is abundant: according to the ODE, 36 percent of students have an economic disadvantage, and African-American students make up more than half of them -- Hispanic students make up another fourth. Those students account for 88 percent of students disciplined.

At Solon, only 9 percent of students have an economic disadvantage. They make up 84 percent of all students disciplined.

The average Solon family brings in \$15,000 more a year than the average Shaker family. Almost one-fifth of Shaker families are below the federal poverty line for a four-person household. Just four percent of Solon families are under such duress.

The socioeconomic breakdown of Shaker is unavoidable and will not change much in the coming years. If economic disadvantage truly is tied to discipline, how much can Shaker's discipline progress?

"It's difficult," Davies said, "but it can always be better. We just have to keep working and looking for options." And Shaker's discipline numbers are improving. The ratio of African-American to white students disciplined is below Shaker's average over the past 10 years. In 2008, the ratio was 72 to 1.

"The frustration is, it's never fast enough. Obviously, you want to eliminate expulsions and suspensions completely. You want to level the playing field," Smith said. "But even then, I'm going to be looking for ways to make the numbers better."

For Louisa, the only thing that could come sooner was the end of her 10-day suspension. She wasn't reassured by a falling discipline rate. She wasn't reassured by her teachers training to improve relations.

"The only way you can control your own destiny is with an education," Smith said. Louisa wasn't sure that the response to her mistake hadn't taken her future out of her hands.

Investigations Reporter Elena Weingart contributed reporting.



JOSHUA PRICE/THE SHAKERITE

**Dean of Students** Greg Zannelli writes a tardy pass for a late student. Tardiness is a tier-one discipline offence punishable by detention or Saturday school. Tier one discipline also includes dress code and cell phone violations.



# Taking a 'Selfish' Approach

Dean of Students Greg Zannelli wants success for every student

ROWAN GINGERICH SPOTLIGHT EDITOR

Few students have met Greg Zannelli, but many more have booed him.

Zannelli, the high school's second dean of students, handles low-level discipline violations, classified as tier one. This tier includes behavioral problems such as "dress code [violations], unauthorized use of electronics, classroom disruptions, things that are seen as not helping the learning environment," he said.

"I think the hardest part is that I only get to see a certain segment of the students," Zannelli said. "There's a large number of students I have yet to interact with that I would like to get to know."

Most students know him as the administrator who said their cars would be towed if parked in faculty spaces, a message he delivered during the annual grade-level assemblies held in September. Students groaned and booed in response. But Zannelli has his sights set on students' success.

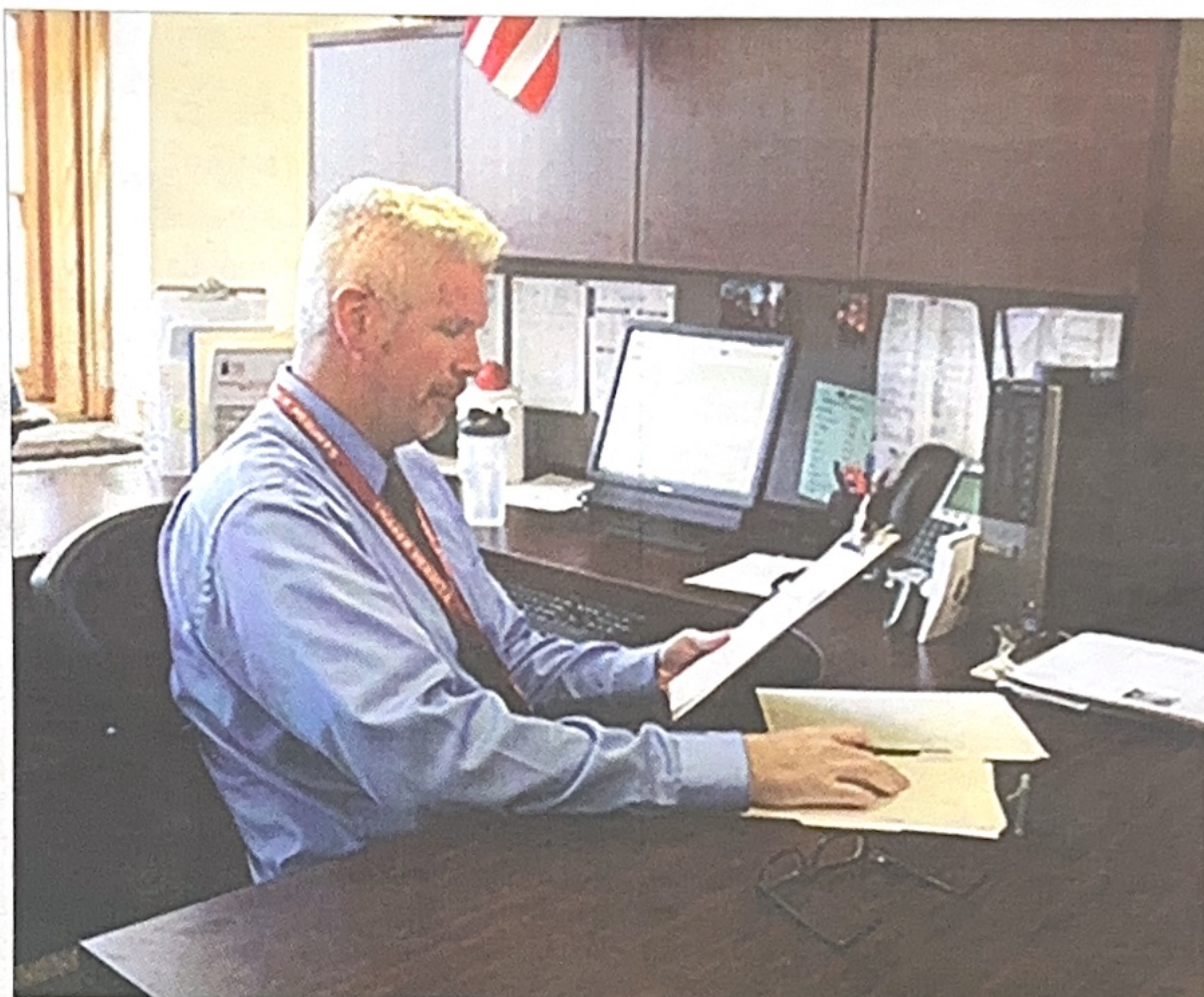
Zannelli graduated from Harbor High School in 1990. Before college, he served in the U.S. Navy for four years. "I loved it. It taught me discipline, I got to travel the world, I made great friends," he said.

After the Navy he attended Youngstown State University and earned a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in education administration. "Initially, I went to college to be an auto mechanic," Zannelli said. "I had a professor for speech class that advised me that education was the area I needed to go in because he felt I was quite entertaining. I think that's half of education -- being entertaining."

"I think what I'm bringing is that, especially for young people, you don't have to take the traditional path sometimes. You can pursue other things and still end up where you want to be," said Zannelli.

Dean of students is a position at most universities and sometimes at private K-12 schools. In every case, the dean is a disciplinarian. Assistant principals managed tier-one disciplinary issues before Jon Moorehead first filled the dean of students position, created in 2014.

The year before Moorehead's arrival,



Dean of Students Greg Zannelli looks over papers in his office. Zannelli used to work in Ashtabula as an athletic director for grades 7-12 and also taught American History and Advanced Placement Human Geography.

JOSH PRICE/THE SHAKERITE

**"To have someone who can triage the behavior and lower disciplinary needs, I think is a good solution to the problem of the assistant principals being spread so thin."**

EMILY SHRESTHA

state law mandated the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System, known as OTES. Administrators perform a brief classroom observation, a full-length classroom observation, hold pre- and post-observation meetings and a final evaluation meeting with every teacher who does not practice peer evaluation. In addition, assistant principals fill out paper forms and enter observation data into a state computer system.

The new evaluation system has "greatly increased our workload in two areas: the number of meetings and paperwork," Assistant Principal Ann Spurrier said in a 2014 interview.

It leaves assistant principals struggling to juggle both evaluation and discipline duties.

"To have someone who can triage the behavior and lower disciplinary needs, I think it is a good solution to the problem of the assistant principals being spread so thin," English teacher Emily Shrestha said.

"It takes some of the weight off the assistant principals," Zannelli said. "Now with the teacher evaluations, it's very demanding on them. So, I'm taking more of the lower-level discipline problems and dealing with those."

When he first learned of the position, Zannelli knew he was interested in it. "I've always regarded Shaker Heights, as most of Ohio does, as a premier district," he said. "With the job description, I thought it would be a perfect fit for my job and my family."

Before this year, Zannelli worked as an athletic director for grades 7-12 at Ashtabula Lakeside High School for three years and taught American History and Advanced Placement Human Geography for 12 years.

"I've always had aspirations of getting into administration," Zannelli said. "I love

building relationships with young people and helping them make great choices and that's what my job is."

So far, Zannelli enjoys working in Shaker. "It's just been nothing but positive," he said.

Shrestha said that her and her students' encounters with Zannelli have been positive as well. "We hang out in the hallways together a lot, and I appreciate that," she said. "I appreciate the adult presence in the hallway with me."

During his tenure, Moorehead was to implement a restorative justice program. Zannelli, on the other hand, has introduced Saturday school as a new disciplinary policy. "They are very different," Shrestha said. "I think they approach the job very differently, and I think that the students respond to Mr. Zannelli very differently than they did to Mr. Moorehead."

During the class assemblies on Sept. 8 and 9, some students reacted negatively when Zannelli spoke. "My personal belief is that the person in charge of the discipline probably can't be somebody's best friend," Shrestha said.

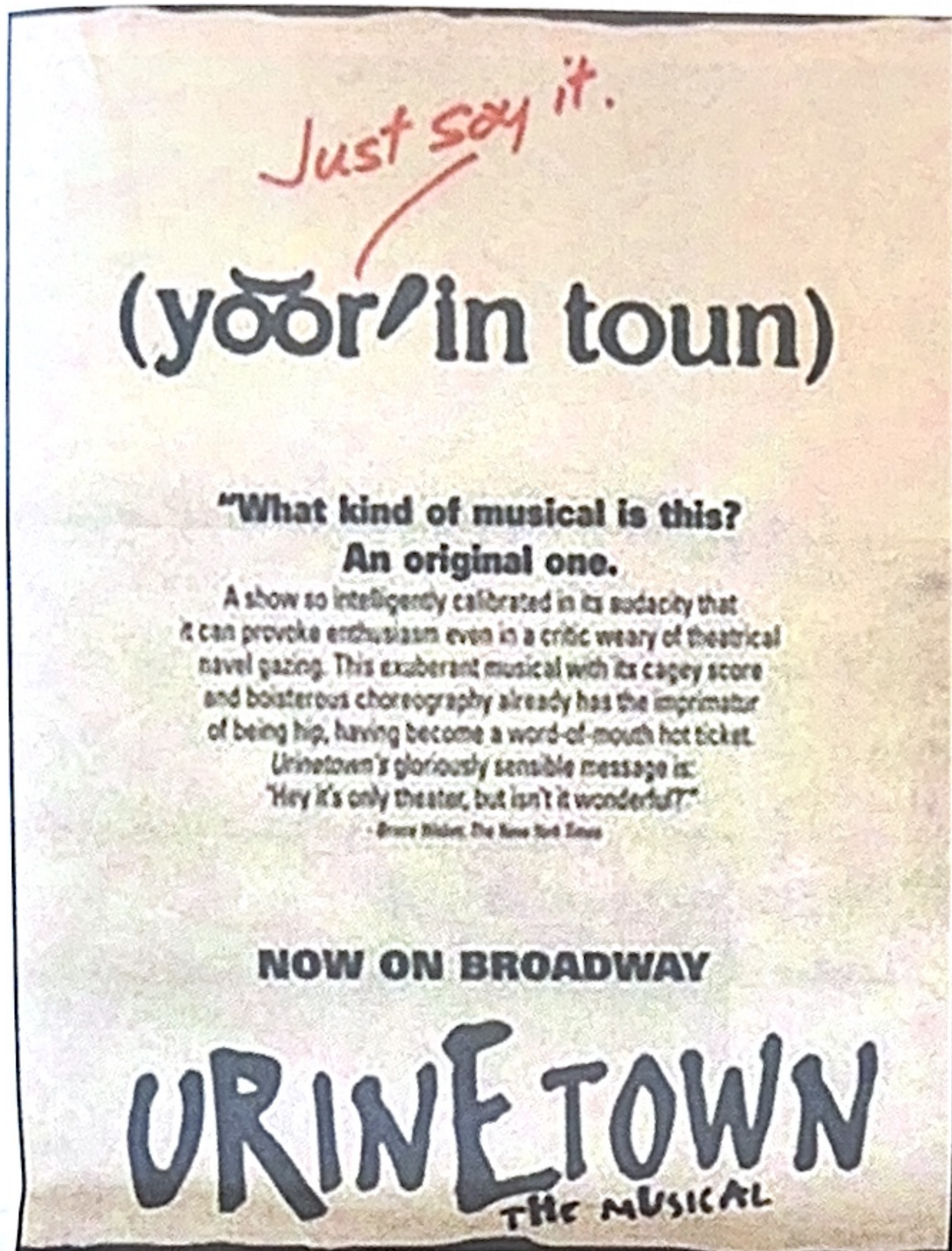
"Everybody was groaning, but that's because, you know, kids get mad when they get punished," said senior Cheyenne Vazquez.

"I think it's somewhat reasonable, it's a punishment. If you don't want it, then just don't do something to get that."

Zannelli's hope for Shaker is that "every student experiences success," he said.

"Often times you hear people when they talk about educators say 'Oh, they're selfless'," Zannelli said. "But I think being an educator is very selfish. Because helping out young people and seeing them succeed, knowing that maybe you had a little to do with the great things they're going to do, it gives you such satisfaction."



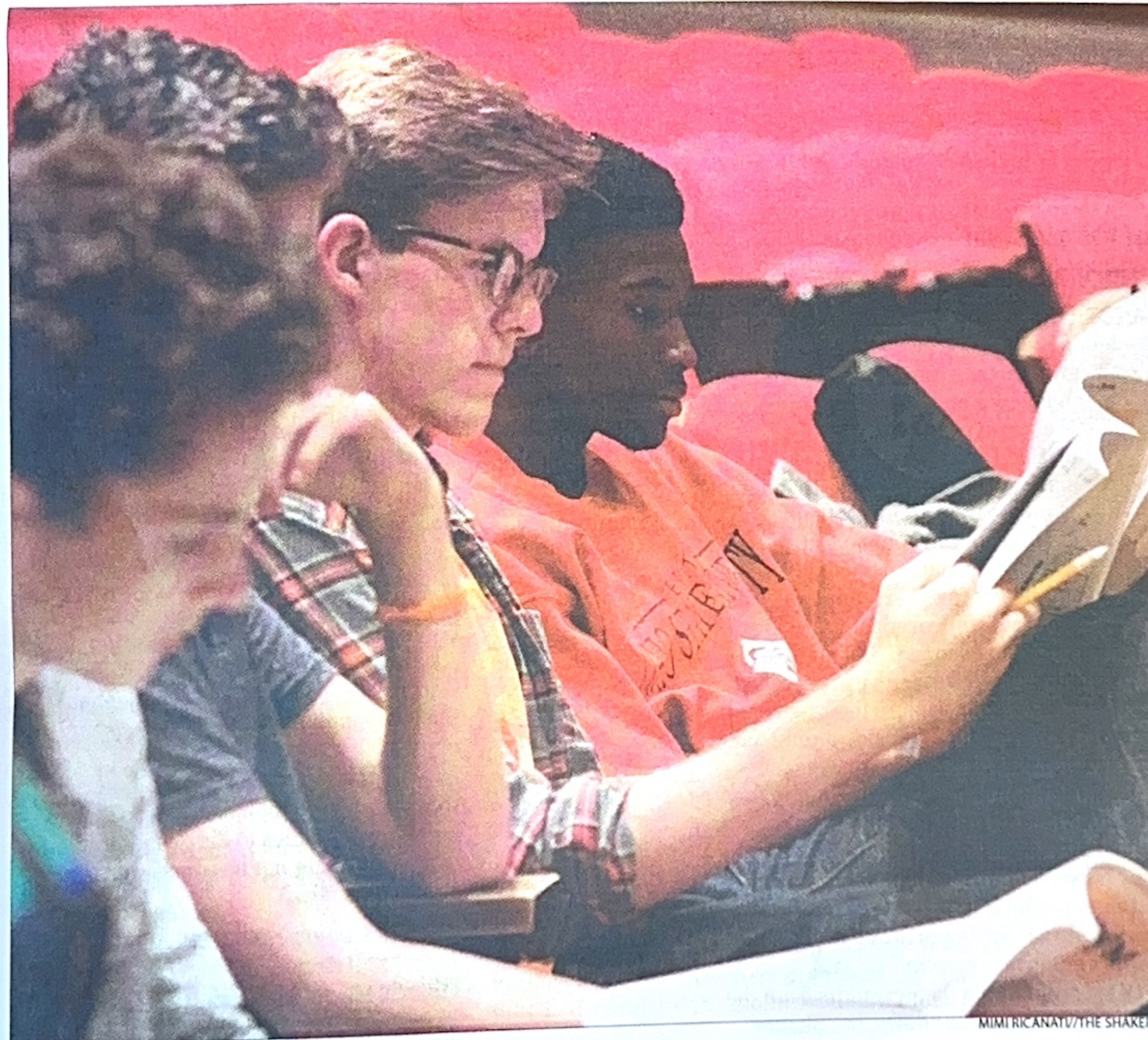


MIMI RICANATI/THE SHAKERITE

Shaker Heights High School's Theatre Department will perform "Urinetown," the 2001 Tony Award-winning show about class struggle in a distant, dystopian reality. On the left is one of the original posters from when the show opened on Broadway. It puts emphasis on the name of the show, and tells the audience to "just say it." Performances of Urinetown run from Dec. 1-3 with a student preview show Nov. 31.



MIMI RICANATI/THE SHAKERITE



MIMI RICANATI/THE SHAKERITE

## This Show's Welcome in Our Town

Nationwide, not every school district welcomes sensitive subjects on stage

EMILY BOARDMAN SPOTLIGHT EDITOR

The complexity of "Les Miserables" and the simplicity of fourth-grade pee jokes? Welcome to "Urinetown."

Shaker Heights High School Theatre Department will perform the Tony Award-winning show, "Urinetown" as their fall musical. Despite its title, the musical is mature and complex, revealing social issues in a divided society.

"While the title is provocative, the show is about class struggle. It doesn't really contain anything more controversial than people wanting to pee without being taxed for it," Theatre Department Chairman Scott Sumerak said.

The show takes place in a dystopian future in which a water shortage leads to a federal ban on private restrooms, resulting in government-regulated toilets that require a user fee. If citizens don't pay the fee, they are sent to the mysterious "Urine-



-town." The show follows the protagonist, Bobby Strong, in his fight to earn the freedom to pee anywhere. The satirical comedy parodies other popular musicals, such as "Les Miserables," "The Threepenny Opera" and Broadway musicals in general. The satire critiques capitalism, social irresponsibility and corporate mismanagement.

"The story is about the class struggle that results from the rich getting richer and the poor unable to afford the basic comfort of a bathroom. The poor eventually rise up to the evil corporations," Sumerak said. He mentioned that the show is appropriate for a younger audience, and only engages in a few fourth-grade level pee jokes.

Before a production is assembled, the department must take a few steps to ensure success. The school needs to gain the production rights from whoever owns the shows and pay royalties for each performance. They also make sure to present the show idea to Principal Jonathan Kuehnle.

"As soon as we knew that Mr. Kuehnle would be in the front office, I reached out to him and let him know our plans," Sumerak said. Doing so helps avoid problems that could arise later.

Nationally, schools have faced censorship on theatrical productions, including "Urinetown." According to the National Coalition Against Censorship, a high school principal in Indiana vetoed a production of "Urinetown," basing his decision solely on the show's title.

However, Sumerak said the musical has been performed widely.

"Many other schools have had great success with this show. There have been numerous productions in places like Solon and Orange, and in a few of the youth theaters on the East Side," he said.

School productions nationally have faced challenges when expressing stories about race and sexuality, and in some cases on-stage violence between characters has become an issue.

"Sometimes those topics are uncomfortable to talk about, but we need to start a dialogue to help us work through difficult issues," Sumerak said. He said theater is the perfect place to address those issues, especially when done educationally and responsibly.

In "Urinetown," a character says, "Nothing can kill a musical like questionable subject matter," an idea that correlates with the trends of the success of certain musicals in schools. "The show sort of winks and nods at the fact that we are making jokes you might tell as an 8 year old and turning them into a big musical," Sumerak said.

Junior Sydney Fieseler believes that while in some cases censorship should be considered, theater is a place to communicate and challenge the audience to reflect on their own lives and experiences. "There are so many plays that feature questionable content while at the same time, display



Junior Ruby Gibson practices a dance during "Urinetown" rehearsals Sept. 30. Gibson is a member of the cast ensemble. Tickets are available at [www.tix.com](http://www.tix.com).

truly beautiful messages," Fieseler said. "There is definitely a benefit to this as not only the audience, but the actors who perform the plays learn quite a bit from it."

"Theater within high school is all about the personal growth of the students, not necessarily about the audience," said senior Gus Mahoney. "Theater can encourage a student not only to grow as an actor, but also it can encourage growth in one's emotional intelligence and also helps students explore their own personal truths."

"I think that the arts in general are an exceptional way to discuss topics that have an impact on the lives of our students. Theater is about sharing our collective stories and exploring what it is that makes us human and ties us together," Sumerak said.

Mahoney said controversial subjects are worth portraying on stage. "If a piece of theater is considered sensitive and explicit but it helps students explore their personal growth, I say go for it," he said, adding that the limits of subjects depend on what students are comfortable performing, and that it is important to trust the performers.

"Theater allows students to explore their personal truths and their emotional truths, something that most students don't necessarily get the opportunity to do in our modern education system," he said.

Censorship in the theater stems from the production of modern shows, but Shaker

**"If a piece of theater is considered sensitive and explicit but it helps students explore their personal growth, I say go for it."**

**GUS MAHONEY**

isn't afraid to pursue a modern approach. In the past few years, the department has performed "Les Miserables" and "Once on This Island" and continued to present student-written plays in its annual New Stages event.

"Urinetown is from 2001 and is just straight-up fun. It's a show that takes itself very seriously, and in doing so, delivers a lot of laughs," he said.

"Moving forward, we hope to continue finding a balance between the old and the new," Sumerak said.

"In New Stages 33, there was a very poignant play called 'The Elephant' about a girl dealing with her own personal conflict of identity as she is pulled between her secret girlfriend and her boyfriend," Mahoney said. Because Shaker does not censor student expression, he said, students can pursue plays such as "The Elephant" that are genuine -- not generic -- portrayals of the high school experience.

Sumerak said, "Shaker is unique, and that has allowed the Theatre Arts Department opportunities to dig deeper into material that might not be considered typical high school fare."

**"Urinetown" runs Dec. 1-3 in the Large Auditorium with a student preview Nov. 31.**





Included in the "Project Deck" released by the city of Shaker Heights is an animated projection of the finished Van Aken District project as seen looking southeast from Farnsleigh Road.

# Making 'Downtown' Shaker Heights From Scratch

Van Aken district redevelopment, to be completed by summer 2018, aims to create city center effect

EMILIE EVANS LIFESTYLE EDITOR

One-hundred and eighteen years after it became a city, Shaker Heights will have its own downtown -- if the \$95 million Van Aken District comes to be in 2018 as planned.

The idea was first introduced in 2000. However, a reconstruction plan was not finalized until 2008. The money needed for the project was raised by 2012. "[It] overall is a \$95 million project, and the majority of it is financed privately," Tania Menesse, director of economic development for Shaker Heights, said.

The city is supplying a \$6.2 million grant for the project, which is expected to be repaid mostly by the new income tax generated by the project. The rest of the money will come from state grants and county loans that the developers, RMS Corporations, are undertaking.

The project began with an \$18.5 million road reconstruction, completed in the summer of 2015. "The city's contribution of that was about \$2.2 million," Menesse said, "The rest of those funds came from county, state and federal sources."

Next came the redevelopment of the buildings. "Many of the tenants that were in Van Aken Center have moved over, and new tenants like New Balance, and a spa that's

**"It's a true, organic extension of the neighborhood. It's not a synthetic creation in the middle of a not-really neighborhood."**

JASON FENTON

going to open in November [or] December," Menesse said. "There are going to be two or three new store fronts with new tenants."

"There's no real city center, there's no downtown," Jason Fenton, director of leasing for RMS Corporations, said of Shaker Heights. "Ultimately, the vision is to create that, so when students are studying for finals they can go to the Orman building where there's open seating and food." The Orman building, which was home to Fresh Market, is the only existing building that will not be torn down and replaced.

The area is named the Van Aken District, but has been tagged by the city and developers as downtown Shaker Heights. Menesse said identifying it in this way will help to draw in people from the rest of greater Cleveland. "It is truly sort of the gathering commercial district for the community, and that does often equate itself with downtown," she said.

Though the city believes the project will draw crowds, students interviewed agreed that the city should stick to calling it the Van Aken District instead of using the downtown designation.

Senior Wyatt Eisen said, "Some people may mistake Van Aken for Shaker Square. I just like Van Aken Place more."

Regardless of the name, the area will give students a new place to hang out, study and do homework.

"There's finally [going to be] a good food area that is close to the high school. Going to Cedar Center or Harvard is way too far," senior Margaret Cook said.

Freshman Nandi Brown said she'd go to Van Aken more than Shaker Square, which is far away from where she lives. "I would go to Van Aken because it's near the school," she said.

Senior Tyler Smith said he would consider visiting the redefined district. "It depends on what they get out of it, but I don't really go to the area often," he said.

"It's in the perfect location between the Fernway neighborhood and the Mercer neighborhood," said senior Margo Hertzler. "It will be much more convenient than Cedar Center and Shaker Square."

Fenton said the Van Aken District will be different than other shopping centers, such as Legacy Village or Crocker Park.

"It's a true, organic extension of the neighborhood. It's not a synthetic creation in the middle of a not-really neighborhood," he said. "It's got a lot of authenticity to it, it's really going to feel like that true downtown."

"When we started this, we went after kind of the best of local," said Fenton. They decided to bring in Cleveland favorites, such as Luna Bakery Cafe, Rising Star Coffee, Mitchell's Ice Cream and are partnering with Jonathan Sawyer, an award-winning chef at Cleveland's Greenhouse Tavern, because they're all, "great and valuable businesses that are only local to Cleveland." He said RMS developers are also negotiating with other restaurants and businesses that will be announced soon.

Fenton said locally-owned stores and their knowledgeable owners "add to the



experiential aspects of what we're trying to create, which is authentic."

During the summer, the city organized beer garden events at the site, where they sold beer, wine and cocktails out of a large shipping container. These events also featured vendors and children's activities in the parking lot.

After the redevelopment, this same area will become the "living room, which is [planned as] a half-acre park that we as the developer will donate back to the city," Fenton said.

The park will be more elevated than some buildings around it, which will create an amphitheatre effect suitable for concerts or outdoor film screenings. "That's one of the ideas, to program the living room, so it really is a true city center, where you can have certain events there and things of that nature," Fenton said.

According to Menesse, dining options will be diverse. "The goal is for it to be a pretty nice mix of restaurants," Menesse said, "There will be two to four white-tablecloth, sit-down, nicer restaurants. Then a good mix of great casual places for families to go." The plans are for a new pizza place, more Asian restaurants, a Mexican place, and take-out places.

Students are excited for the businesses that will open when the project concludes in June 2018.

Cook says she's most excited for the introduction of Luna. "It has great food and a really good environment for meeting up with friends for breakfast, lunch or a snack," she said.

"I'm just hoping it'll be a place where everyone can go to feel comfortable after school," said Brown.

"It gives the younger generations somewhere to go and something to do," senior Jakee Frazier said, "We already have Shaker Square, and now we'll have Van Aken, so there will be somewhere for everyone to go in the two different areas."

"My hopes for it are for it to really make it so people can do more things instead of just being stuck going to Shaker Square. It gives you more options, more variety," said Frazier.

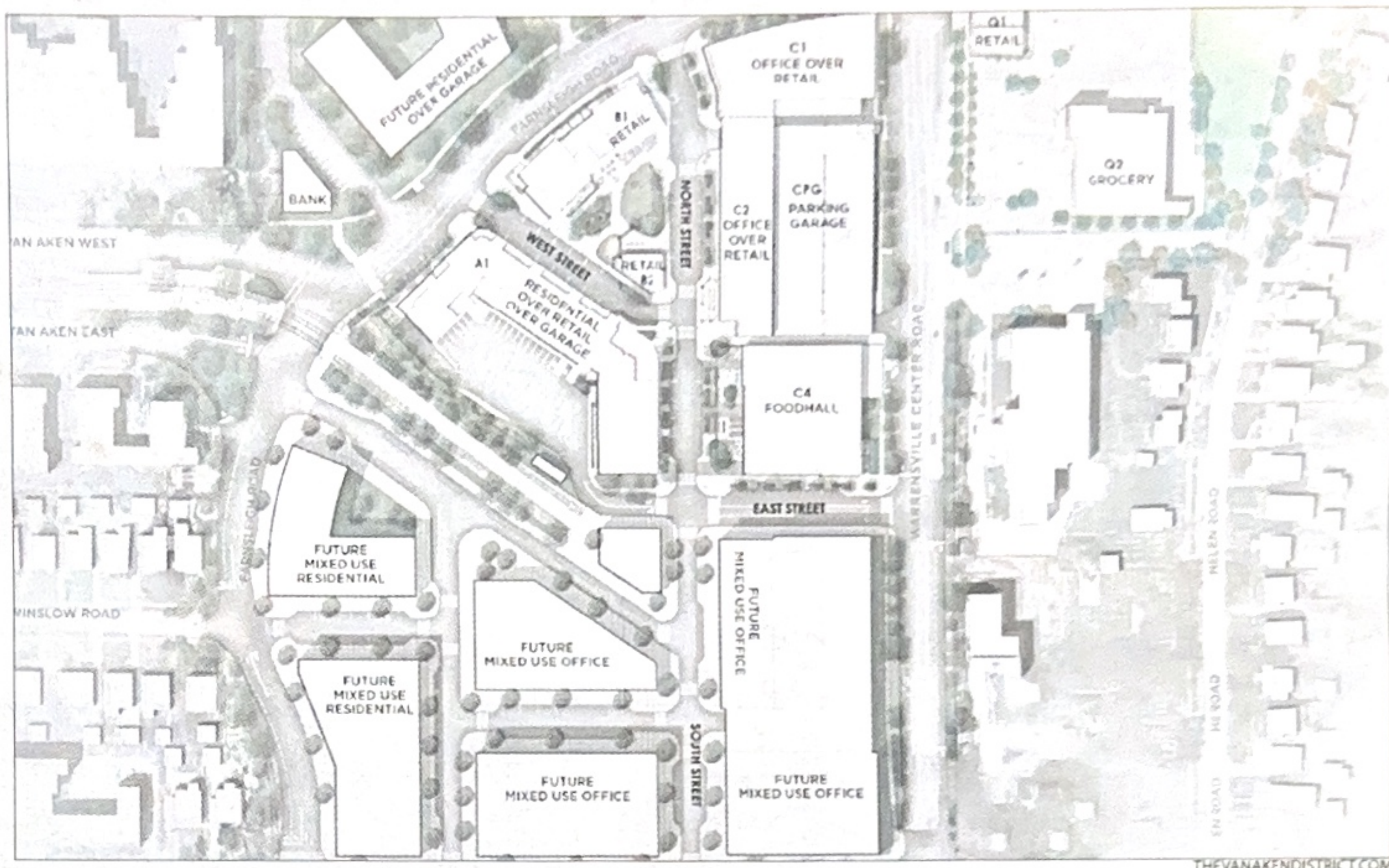
"I'm not entirely sure of what there is going to be," said Eisen. "I'm excited for the Mitchell's though."

One of the initial steps of remodeling involved the destruction of Starbucks, which was supposed to return in 2015, but never did.

"We don't really know what Starbucks is going to do. They'll want a drive-thru and will evaluate the market as the district opens in 2018," Menesse said. "They're evaluating whether it makes sense to come back into the district."

Junior Meredith Frothingham expressed disappointment about the loss of Starbucks. "I was really sad and extremely inconvenienced," she said.

Another more recent change was the closing of The Fresh Market. The original



The city of Shaker Heights presented a map of the Van Aken area that shows what will be in each building when Shaker and RMS developers finish remodeling in June 2018. New businesses include Mitchell's Ice Cream, Luna Bakery Cafe and Rising Star Coffee.

plan was to rebuild it, but Menesse said The Fresh Market will not return.

"Fresh Market was purchased by a private equity firm called Apollo in February [2016], and they were [originally] moving forward with the relocation," Menesse said, adding that Apollo has been closing many of their stores and have frozen expansion plans.

They ultimately decided against rebuilding. However, city council is confident another grocer will show interest in the space.

"We value grocery, and we think that grocery is a great amenity to the overall district," Fenton said. "We are working tirelessly to get a grocery store that fits in with the overall vision."

Fenton said that the vision is to have a new grocery store, similar to The Fresh Market, with convenient grab-and-goes and pre-made meals.

"With an educated clientele and market like Shaker, you want to have foods that are organic, that are locally grown, and be cognizant of that," Fenton said. "But you also have high quality food that's already prepared and easy for the shopper to grab in addition to their grocery items."

Menesse said that to mark the first phase of the development and demolition of Van Aken Center, RMS and the city will host New Starts Now, a celebration of the project, Nov. 12 from 12 to 5 p.m. The event will occur at Shaker Plaza inside the space next to the new Pearl Asian Kitchen.

New Starts Now will include a beer lounge, a pop-up shop of future Van Aken District retailers, a public art project and kids' activities including an interactive scavenger hunt with prizes. Food trucks and restaurant fare will be available.

Shaker Heights is spending a lot on re-

**"It's in the perfect location between the Fernway neighborhood and the Mercer neighborhood."**

**MARGO HERTZER**

building Van Aken Center, and some students aren't sure whether the cost is worth it.

"After the Van Aken Center has been up and running for a certain amount of time, then we can evaluate if the money was well spent," Himes said.

"I think it will raise revenue for the city and make Shaker a more desirable place to live," Hertzner said.

Any commercial development in the city spurs hope for increased property tax revenue, which helps fund the schools. According to Menesse, Shaker Heights is 92 percent residential, which means there are few businesses to help relieve the tax burden on homeowners.

Menesse said that the Van Aken District will not affect homeowner's tax rates in the short term.

"The first phase of the district will create a place which will help the city of Shaker Heights retain and attract new residents, which does translate to new income and property taxes," she said.

"The schools approved a tax increment financing proposal for the district which will generate approximately \$500,000 a year in new property taxes for the schools," Menesse said.

Frazier thinks the Van Aken District will be a great place for kids to work and for families to go to.

"I think it's a good plan to help bring some money into Shaker," he said.

"Not only is it a great investment, but it will make Shaker a nicer environment," freshman Abe Arenberg said.

Cook thinks the project will be worth the money and is long overdue. She said, "Shaker is in need of a new hangout spot besides Shaker Square."



# Finding Purpose in the After-School Job

Nadia DeGeorgia departs from the minimum wage routine in her work with autistic students

MAGGIE SPIELMAN LIFESTYLE EDITOR

Senior Nadia DeGeorgia has a secret identity: she works as a part-time behavioral aide, helping students with autism lead fulfilling lives.

"I help [my clients] with any difficulties they experience in their lives that come with autism. That can include if they're afraid of something," DeGeorgia said.

"I have one client who is terrified of babies, so we're working on that," she said. "It could also be if a student has a tantrum every morning before school, or it can be if a kid won't eat anything but ketchup. These are some challenges that families with autistic kids face. My job is to come in and try to alleviate those difficulties."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines Autism Spectrum Disorder as "a group of behaviors indicating social, communicative, and behavioral impairment or abnormalities." Those diagnosed with autism may have "impaired reciprocal social interactions, delayed or unusual communication styles, and restricted or repetitive behavior patterns."

DeGeorgia works directly with families in their homes to focus on their needs. "Going into their space is the most effective way," she said. "If the child is having a really difficult time with a certain task or behavior in their lives, it doesn't make any sense for me to take the child out of that environment, work on that task at my house and try to bring them back. So, I go and work directly wherever the behavior is occurring."

She currently works with two different clients for two to three sessions a week each. "Each one is different on what their needs are," she said. DeGeorgia must plan and communicate with the family for her sessions to be successful. "One of the things that I really enjoy about the job is that I don't necessarily have to put in a lot of hours, but I can still work from home and do things without having to be in front of the client," she said.

DeGeorgia ultimately aspires to become a board-certified behavior analyst, a career that she feels is relevant not just to autism, but to her daily life. "If you do something right, I'll just be overly enthusiastic about it because that's just part of the nature of my job," she said.

Her work as a behavioral aide has made it easier to identify habits of a person with whom she's interacting. "My brain is catching those things and I'm associating them, 'Oh that's an escape behavior. You're do-



MAGGIE SPIELMAN/THE SHAKERITE

As a behavioral aide, senior Nadia DeGeorgia works with autistic children and helps them with any difficulties they experience. "So, if the child is having a really difficult time with a certain task or behavior in their lives, it doesn't make any sense for me to take the child out of that environment," she said.

ing that because you don't want to do that work," she said.

DeGeorgia's passion arose when she first entered the special education room in seventh grade at Shaker Heights Middle School.

"There's something about that room that definitely attracts kindness," she said. "People have dedicated their entire lives to helping others. I started working with the students there."

One of her frustrations is that students are unaware of where the special education room is. "It's a room that you pass every single day. It's right by the band room, it's right by the orchestra room, and you have no idea that there are 12 students [who] spend every single day there," she said.

DeGeorgia also works as a home care aide for her therapy clients. "I'll get an email from a family saying, 'Hey, we're going to some event,' or 'Hey, can you work with so-

**"If a high schooler wants a job, I would absolutely tell them to pass up the minimum wage job for something that's more meaningful."**

**NADIA DEGEORGIA**

and-so for this day,' and I will sort of be with the student, have a behavioral plan, make sure that everything is OK. I'm going with a student to a Halloween party soon."

DeGeorgia said work found her. "It's all about who you know and word of mouth," she said. "I can't put up posters or advertise," she explained, because she is not certified in the field. She said that she could never imagine working as a cashier, for example, after spending so much time striving to pursue her passion. "It's kind of a way to find out if it's what I want to do," she said.

"I definitely have learned and grown so much in having to plan things and having to be ready to tackle any problem and answer questions and I have learned actual material from having to do research on how to do [applied behavioral analysis]," she said. "There's just so much value and I enjoy it so much; there's no way I could go back to having a regular job."





ZACHARY NOSANCHUK// THE SHAKERITE

DeGeorgia works with special education aides Kierra Davis and Samantha Bowers during her lunch period. In her work with families, she focuses on a particular behavior. "It's my job to figure out what it's communicating and from there, why and what to do about it," she said.

DeGeorgia said that she doesn't struggle to balance her career with her school work.

After school, she grabs her therapy supplies and heads to her client's home. "I will actually work directly with the student and then I'll have some time afterwards to sit down with the parents and make sure that they're on board with everything that we're doing, let them know what I'd like them to do at home," she said.

She usually arrives home around 6:30 p.m. and spends the rest of her night finishing homework.

"Even after one of those hard nights of four hours of homework, and I'm totally exhausted, it ends up being my reward where I get to say, 'OK, now I get to finally work on my work stuff,'" she said.

Although balancing her school and work responsibilities isn't difficult for her, DeGeorgia described how working with autistic students can be challenging. "It can be really difficult with autistic students if they can't communicate effectively or identify their emotions. That's what I need to address first," she said.

DeGeorgia explained that applied behavior analysis is scientific because there is a right and wrong way to administer care. "Every behavior has a function, so if I have a student [who], every time I pull out a book, runs away and has a tantrum, that tantrum, that behavior, is telling me something," she

**"I know that feeling, where you feel inferior because of your age. But if you decide to ignore that and just go ask people – at least in my experience – very few people actually say no if make the first step and say, 'I want this.'"**

**NADIA DEGEORGIA**

said. "It's my job to figure out what it's communicating and from there, why and what to do about it."

DeGeorgia recently worked with a student whose family intended to get a dog. The student displayed great fear of dogs, so DeGeorgia helped her student overcome that fear by using reinforcement techniques. "We'd bring a picture of a dog and if [the student] looked at the picture, you'd literally hold the picture up for one second, turn it off and say, 'Wow, good job!' making sure that it's a positive association with the dog,"

DeGeorgia said. "The more and more you try to bring it into his life, you watch videos, you bring stuffed animals, you increase that time segment that you're expecting him to do your preferred behavior."

DeGeorgia does not like to spend the money she earns from working unless it benefits her career. "I basically just put all of it into a savings account," she said. She spends time searching for educational tools or rewards for her clients. She said, "If I spend my money that I earn on anything, it will be going right back into buying pencil grips, or buying puzzles or a calendar."

DeGeorgia admits that sometimes the responsibility she holds as an aide intimidates her. "If this student starts having meltdowns, they're gonna text me. Like, how did I get in this position?" she said. "If you tell an individual with autism that you're going to show up at 3 p.m., if you're not there by 3 p.m., that's going to ruin their entire world."

With responsibility comes power, which is something she has learned to appreciate. "When a student does something, and the parents don't know what to do, and you know what to do, and it actually, like, works, then it's just this weird feeling of, 'Wow, I'm actually kind of good at this,'" she said.

DeGeorgia's job also involves being creative and interpreting things that may be subjective. "Sometimes you're just like, 'Oh, OK, I don't know what that was supposed to mean. But let's work with it,'" she said.

She urges peers not to pursue jobs that won't benefit them in the long run.

"If a high schooler wants a job, I would absolutely tell them to pass up the minimum wage job for something that's more meaningful because it has so many benefits if you go beyond the money," she said. She found that looking online for work or emailing professionals in the field can be rewarding.

DeGeorgia said, "I know that feeling, where you feel inferior because of your age. But if you decide to ignore that and just go ask people – at least in my experience – very few people actually say no if you make the first step and say, 'I want this.'"



NADIA DEGEORGIA



# Think Star Wars, Without Lightsabers



Junior Ben Wilson and Jenna Stahl ('09) practice in the basement fencing room. "First of all it doesn't hurt," said junior fencer Adnan Reddy. "It hurts a lot less than other contact sports. It's not just waving a sword around. There's so much more that goes into it."

## Fencing state champions develop mentally and physically while practicing "mental chess"

ALEXA JANKOWSKY RAIDER ZONE EDITOR

Four centuries after the art of fencing earned its name, Shaker students gather in the basement to lunge at one another with swords.

"I think to everyone that fences, whether they go to the school or not, it's an important part of your life," said junior fencer Adnan Reddy. "It teaches decision-making, work ethic -- it makes you more fit and flexible -- you fence for all your life."

The sport's name comes from the Middle English word defence, and was defined as an art, one that Shaker fencers have mastered. The men's fencing team has won three consecutive state championships, and the women's team two.

The club's members succeed beyond high school, fencing in college and internationally. Alumni of the fencing team include Stephen Trevor ('81), Lindsay Campbell ('98) and Jason Pryor, graduate of Brush ('05), all of whom went onto Olympic competition.

Pryor placed 22nd in men's epee at the 2016 Olympics.

"The big win is that [students] develop. It also proves very good for entrance to colleges. All the schools recognize the rigors of fencing," head coach Bill Reith said.

Fencing comprises three styles: saber, epee and foil. Each employs unique weap-

ons and tactics. Fencing matches are one-on-one and last until a fencer accumulates a predetermined number of points. A saber fencer scores by striking his opponent above the hips with the sword. Epee fencers can strike anywhere, including the head, legs and arms. Foil fencers only score when hitting the opponent in the torso with the tip of the blade.

"Fencing is an old sport and actually is a martial art. Learning to fence requires not only mastering footwork, developing accuracy and strength with a weapon, but also respect for your opponent," said Elizabeth Billings, parent of Shaker fencer Maeve Billings. "[The] coach describes it as physical chess, requiring both stamina and strategy from each individual."

Because the sport requires swords, fencers wear protective gear and use swords with blunted ends. "It doesn't hurt. It hurts a lot less than other contact sports," Reddy said.

Due to the precautions, bruises are the only typical repercussion of a match. "I started fencing recently myself and was worried that it would hurt when my opponent inevitably scored a touch. Experience has taught me that it can be uncomfortable when I'm hit, and I might get a bruise, but it doesn't really hurt," Billings said.

Fencing is offered free to students, although tournament fees and registration with the fencing association are required in addition to equipment rental fees for students who do not have their own.

"It's still very reasonable," Reith said. "And the school is gracious enough to pay

for transportation."

Fencing is a club sport, though students receive varsity participation letters and gym credit for the winter season.

"The OHSAA does not recognize fencing as a high school sport, and that's a good thing; it would limit the times, hours and training," said Reith. "Varsity sports, like football, have to find other ways to avoid it, like weight training. Fencing is a year-round sport."

Shaker fencers can choose to attend two practice times, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.. The Alcazar Fencing Club practices alongside the Shaker fencing team in the high school's fencing room, located in the basement adjacent to the dance room and custodians' offices. The club is open to everyone, regardless of age and residence. The fencers concentrate on footwork and practicing against their teammates.

"The four o'clock practice generally starts with general exercises. Depending on the season, we run, stretch, do pushups, situps. Then we practice footwork, how to stand, practice, advancing, retreating, learning new techniques and getting comfortable with the new techniques. Then people just have time to fence," Reddy said.

Adults are involved in the 7 p.m. practice. "For night practice, you kind of come in and can do whatever you want. There are few activities where the coach tells everyone they need to do this. Everyone knows what they want or need to do to get better, or the coach will tell them," Reddy said.

Elementary school students also participate.

"With fencing, it's important to start young. More than any other sport, it doesn't even matter if you're strong, fast or smart even. It's all about how much time you put in. It's impossible to have a functioning club without younger kids," Reddy said.

Younger club members connect with older members, who provide stiffer competition.

"I think working with different ages helps because it gets you used to different skill levels," seventh-grader Emerie Anderson said.

"There's a big age range," said Reith, "and those kids that stick with it, once they get to the high school, are quite good. I owe [the program's success] to the Alcazar Fencing Club. We're three fold in that respect."

Reith expressed confidence in his team. "The club's been extremely successful and it's going to continue to be extremely successful. It's just a matter of how well [the fencers] do and where they go, and that's up to them," he said.

"I can guide them and give them what they need, but they have to want it."

Investigations Editor Astrid Braun contributed reporting.

**"Learning to fence requires not only mastering footwork, developing accuracy and strength with a weapon, but also respect for your opponent."**

ELIZABETH BILLINGS



# Anthem Protests Drive Shaker Response



Senior volleyball players Brianna Ali and Cydney Calhoun remained in the locker room during the national anthem before a Sept. 20 game against Elyria High School. Ali and Calhoun consulted athletic director Don Readance before their protest.

## NFL player's demonstration inspires similar acts nationwide, including a protest before a Shaker contest

DON BENINCASA RAIDER ZONE EDITOR

**A**n NFL quarterback's protest has hit the hardwood courts of Shaker.

Senior volleyball players Brianna Ali and Cydney Calhoun approached Athletic Director Don Readance to explain their discomfort with standing for the national anthem before the Raiders' Sept. 20 game against Elyria. They were inspired by San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who knelt during the national anthem at the 49ers Aug. 26 preseason game against the Green Bay Packers.

"One [athlete] had a personal family situation that made them feel that standing for the national anthem was not something they believed in. The other [athlete] did some digging in looking into the lyrics of the anthem a little deeper and found that there were some things that they did not really believe in," Readance said.

Readance discussed the situation with Elyria Athletic Director Heather Beck. They worked out a way for the players to protest the anthem at a Sept. 20 game. The athletic

directors gave the option of kneeling during the anthem or sitting in the locker room. Ali and Calhoun chose to sit in the locker room.

Kaepernick's act drew widespread praise and criticism nationwide, and he explained that he had used status as a professional athlete to illuminate police brutality and the First Amendment right to protest. In particular, he was protesting police shootings of unarmed African-American men.

"I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color," he told nfl.com.

Kaepernick's protest resonated with athletes at both amateur and professional levels. Athletes of different sports, genders and race have all taken a knee since Kaepernick's initial protest.

Brunswick High School's quarterback, senior Rodney Axson Jr., knelt during the anthem on Sept. 12 before a game against Austintown Fitch. Axson, who is African-American, was the target of racist slurs and hateful messages. Calhoun said that she was unwilling to express her feelings about the anthem in towns other than Shaker. "Here, this is our home, so of course we feel safe doing it here. But, if we go places like Brunswick, Medina, Strongsville, we don't know how they would react," she said.

"I was impressed with how they handled

**"My biggest concern is just I don't want anybody to have to suffer, especially a young person, any kind of negative backlash, whether it be people in the stands or other participants."**

DON READANCE

it. If anybody else came forward with something similar or their own situation, I would be supportive of them. My biggest concern is I don't want anybody to have to suffer, especially a young person, any kind of negative backlash, whether it be people in the stands or other participants," Readance said.

Principal Jonathan Kuehnle commended Calhoun and Ali for speaking to Readance ahead of their protest. "I admire those students for coming forward and speaking about it intelligently and personally," he said. "Saying, 'Hey, we're not trying to cause a stir, we're not trying to cause a scene or anything like that, because it's personal to us.'"

Calhoun based her protest on the third stanza of the "The Star Spangled Banner." In those lines, the poem's author, Francis Scott Key, speaks of slavery and African Americans who fought in the Revolutionary War, "No refuge could save—the hireling and slave from the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave."

"I'm standing for a song that's not even showing my freedom. It's basically saying 'I will never be free,'" Calhoun said in reference to the line. According to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, the Star Spangled Banner was meant to be a patriotic song, inspired by the Battle of Baltimore in the War of 1812. It describes the battle, giving the impression of a song meant to honor the military. In defense of Kaepernick's protest, some people have said that Key's lyrics celebrate the death of runaway slaves. Others contend that the lyrics refer to British soldiers who were hired as mercenaries or forced into military service during the war.

Criticism of Kaepernick's protest includes the assertion that he disrespected military personnel by refusing to stand for the anthem.

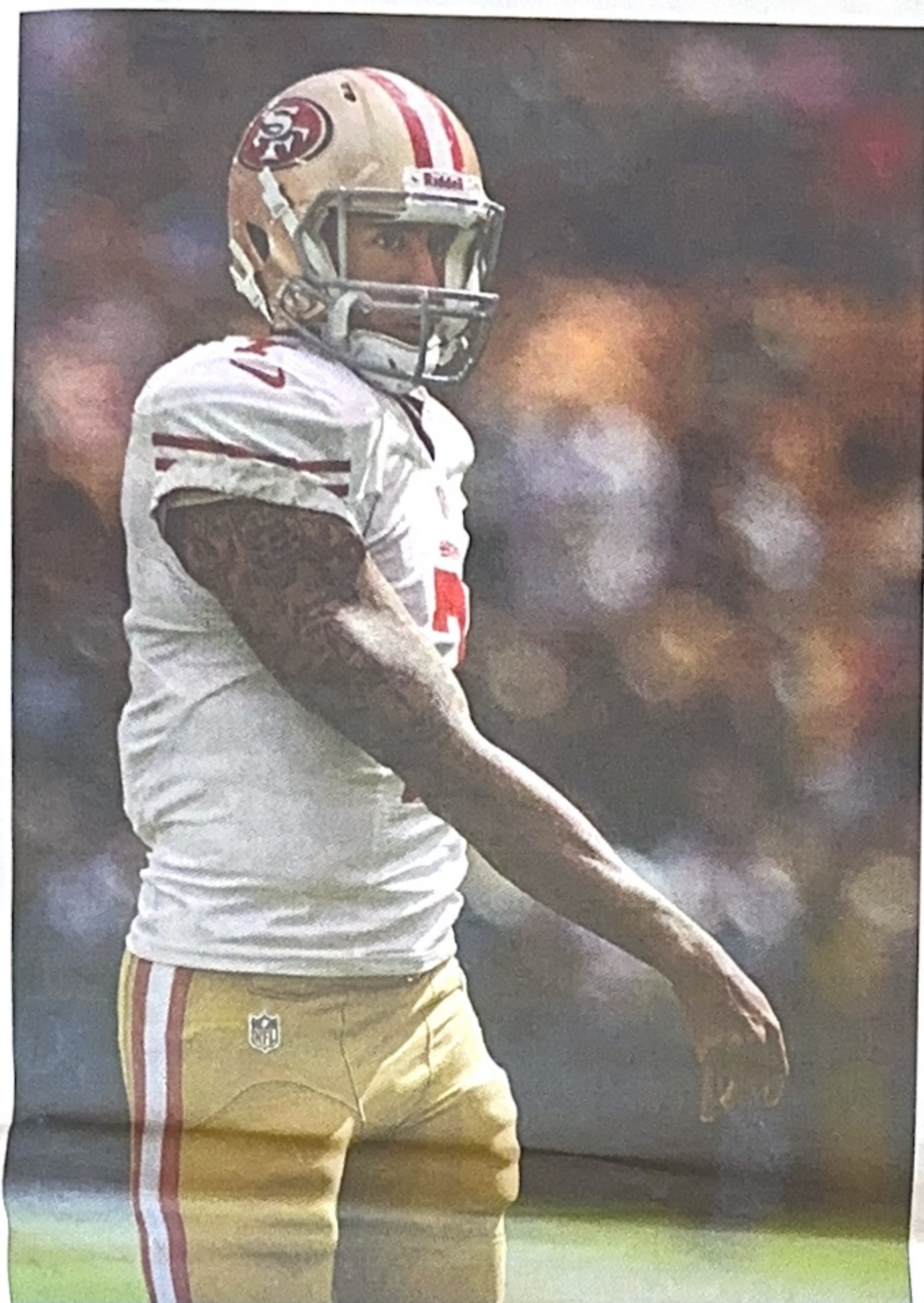
"I didn't have an issue with [Kaepernick] taking a knee because he made it very clear that it has nothing to do with the military. If you're going to take a look at it from the military sense, that's what they're fighting for -- they're fighting for our freedoms," said Jarvis Gibson, Shaker head football coach.

Other Shaker athletes agree that kneeling during the anthem is not a problem. While Ali and Calhoun's act is the first anthem protest from a Shaker student-athlete, athletes are open to the idea.

Shaker football players always remain in the locker room during the national anthem, and senior Jakee Frazier said he would kneel with his teammates if they were ever to stand on the field at a home game.

"I've been saying all year I would take the knee and I have talked to my teammates about it," he said. "They said they would do it."





WIKICOMMONS

Colin Kaepernick knelt during the national anthem before the San Francisco 49ers preseason game Aug. 26. "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color," he told nfl.com.

## THE Kaepernick EFFECT

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Aug. 26  | Colin Kaepernick kneels during the national anthem in his third NFL preseason game.           |
| Sept. 1  | Kaepernick and teammate Eric Reid kneel during the anthem in their fourth NFL preseason game. |
| Sept. 1  | Seattle Seahawks' cornerback Jeremy Lane kneels during anthem.                                |
| Sept. 4  | USA women's soccer player Meagan Rapinoe kneels in support of Kaepernick.                     |
| Sept. 9  | Denver Broncos' Brandon Marshall takes a knee in NFL season-opener.                           |
| Sept. 17 | Howard University cheerleaders kneel during the national anthem.                              |
| Sept. 21 | Entire Indiana Fever basketball team and two Phoenix Mercury players kneel during the anthem. |

# Despite His Good Intentions, Kaepernick Falls Short

NFL QB's protest against police brutality failed because ignoring the anthem disrespects the military

Colin Kaepernick means well, but he is wrong. The national anthem is meant to honor the men and women who serve our country. It was written about the Battle of Baltimore during the War of 1812. In his lyrics, Francis Scott Key describes the glory of patriotism he felt for America.



Don Benincasa  
Raider Zone Editor

The anthem is a rallying cry for us as American patriots. We Americans criticize the country every day. We complain

about the police, military spending, taxes and political candidates.

But, for about two and a half minutes before an athletic event, we stand up, remove our hats and show our love for our country. No matter what political positions you hold, no matter what religion you follow, no matter what race you are, we unite to show national pride.

During "The Star Spangled Banner," we stand not only for our country, but for those who serve it.

These individuals sacrifice their lives every day to help people whom they've never met, and kneeling during the national anthem disrespects their efforts.

Americans don't pay enough respect to our veterans, and the least we can do is stand up and acknowledge them during the national anthem.

However, everyone holds different per-

spectives about what the national anthem truly represents.

The First Amendment gives us this thing called freedom of speech. It's a wonderful concept. Different people can interpret the lyrics as they wish.

This freedom is evident in those who point to the lines, "No refuge could save—the hireling and slave from the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave," as proof that Francis Scott Key was celebrating the death of runaway slaves.

**Why You  
Should  
Care**

Our interpretation is affected by our backgrounds and our upbringings. I'm a white male from Shaker Heights, Ohio. I'm not going to view the national anthem as a Chinese-American female from California, or a Muslim male from Texas, or an African-American female from Detroit. But no matter our identities, we should consider the anthem's lyrics in their historical context.

Some people aren't bothered that Kaepernick knelt during the anthem. To them, he is an athlete using his influence to bring social change, one urgently needed.

Racism and excessive use of force by America's police officers are undeniable problems. Police have shot innocent black men and women. Tamir Rice, Michael Brown Jr. and Eric Garner were all killed because of police officers' prejudice.

I respect Kaepernick's motives, and I respect his commitment to his protest, despite all the criticism -- even death threats -- he has received. His protest made him the most disliked player in the NFL, according to a poll by E-Market Research.

Though he means well, he is still disrespecting the flag, and therefore disrespecting the United States military.

He has alternatives

He could have held a press conference, released a statement to the press, or stated his beliefs in a postgame interview.

Any of these options would have avoided offending veterans and their families.

Nevertheless, Kaepernick's act has brought about more discussion of police brutality and racism.

In American history, protests against issues like police brutality have usually brought change for the better.

Efforts such as the women's suffrage movement and the civil rights movement started with peaceful protest.

Peaceful protest promotes positive change in the country, but kneeling during the anthem does not. The military and the police aren't the same thing.

Kneeling for the national anthem -- a song written about the military's performance during a war -- to protest police brutality is wrong.

FOLLOW RAIDER SPORTS @RZ\_Shakerite



## WHAT I'M SNACKING ON

PHILLIP KALAFATIS OPS EDITOR



Hot Fudge Sundae Pop-Tarts. That's it, that's all that needs to be said. It's the flavor of a hot fudge sundae in a compact rectangle. Not just one beautiful rectangle, but two. It's double the goodness with half the size and mess of a hot fudge sundae. Every bite is an explosion of chocolate and vanilla flavor swirling in your mouth.

The chocolate dough surrounding the inner vanilla creme is a perfect combination of competing flavors. The Pop-Tarts company's ability to take a cold, delicious treat and transform it into a dry, doughy treat is remarkable. The Pop-Tart itself is visually pleasing. The vanilla frosting on the chocolate is the perfect contrast of colors. The rainbow sprinkles add a spark of pizzazz, creating a festive vibe. In short, Hot Fudge Sundae Pop-Tarts are a bright light in an otherwise dreary world.



Want to read more stories that will make you laugh and cry simultaneously? Want to stay sane during first semester? Want to stay up to date with all the latest news in the Shake? Visit [www.shakerite.com](http://www.shakerite.com)

## WHAT SHOULD BE IN THE NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

1. Escalators
2. Climate control in classrooms
3. Socially integrated student body
4. Nap time
5. Enough computers for everyone
6. Space to walk in the hallways
7. Jacuzzis
8. Lockers that aren't ovens
9. Fully-functioning bathrooms
10. Team names that aren't cringe-worthy



## Sarcastic Awards: November 2016



## KUEHNLE'S CORNER

"Shaker spirit! 1st pep rally. Homecoming game and dance tomorrow. Go Raiders! Pulverize the Pioneers!" - Jonathan Kuehnle via Twitter, Sept. 30, 2016.



## Heard in the Halls

"My boyfriend is giving birth!"

September 13, 12:18 PM

"I'm so tired I can't even spread this cream cheese on my bagel."

May 6, 7:48 AM

"My mom's super obsessed with the Muppets."

November 13, 12:58 PM

## WANTED

FLEX NIGHT,  
TEST DAYS

REWARD:  
STUDENT SANITY



## The Meh List

1. Hillary's emails
2. Trump's tax returns
3. The election
4. iOS 10
5. Harambe memes
6. Halloween on a Monday
7. Teachers ignoring flex night
8. Water bottle flipping
9. Pokemon GO

## Questions for Shaker Heights High School Restrooms

EMILY MONTENEGRO OPINION EDITOR

Why won't the hand dryer turn off? It's burning through so much electricity, paper towels might be less wasteful. And why can't the toilets chill with their flushing? This is a restroom stall, not the splashzone. There's no need to concern the next person who goes and realizes there's an indistinguishable liquid -- more than likely just toilet water from the violent flushing -- sprayed all over the seat. And the floors. Why are the floors always wet? Shaker custodians

are in there regularly, but the rest of the school trashes the bathrooms faster than the toilet automatically flushes. Also, if a stall door doesn't have a fully functioning lock, it is wrong, and it needs to get right. Can there be a designated dry area to hang or place a hall pass too, please? Oh, school restrooms, why are you like this?

**Raider Rant**

## AP COMPARE AND CONTRAST: AP Classes and Bifocal Glasses

AP Classes	Category	Bifocal Glasses
Well-Rounded	Shape	Circles
Create Fragile Students	Sturdiness	Fragile
You Can Be The Test	Test Prep	You Can See The Test
Help You Focus (and Cry)	Helpful	Help You Focus

WINNER: Bifocal Glasses, for helping students see the big picture

## TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE



1. The Czech Republic changed its English name to Czechia (CHECK-ee-yuh).



2. The South African Water Elephant has 32 teeth, not including its tusks.



3. November is National Georgia Pecan Month in the United States.

Answers: 1) True. 2) False. South African Water Elephants do not exist. 3) True. November is also National Pepper Month and National Raisin Bread Month.

## THE SHAKERITE

Nov 4, 2016  
Volume 87 // Issue 2

Nora Spadoni\* • Editor in Chief • Grace Lougheed\* • Print Managing Editor • Zachary Nosanchuk\* • Media Managing Editor • Lily Roth\* • Web Managing Editor • Yasmine Kayali • Journalism Managing Editor • Julia Barragante • Campus and City Editors • Abigail Aronoff Ellie Vahey • Campus and City Reporters • Emet Celeste-Cohen Astrid Braun • Investigations Editors • Elena Weingart • Investigations Reporter • Emily Montenegro\* Hannah Kornblut\* • Opinion Editors • Izzy Markey Lauren Smith • Columnists • Emily Boardman Rowan Gingerich • Spotlight Editors • Phillip Kalafatis • OPS Editor/Reporter • Emilie Evans Maggie Spielman • Lifestyle Editors • Alexa Jankowsky Don Benincasa • Raider Zone Editors • Ana Yaskinsky • Enterprise Reporter • Andrew Mohar • Copy Chief • Sarah Grube Anabel McGuan • Assistant Copy Editors • Ose Arheghan • Multimedia Editor • Joshua Price • Photo Editor • Dan Falokun •

Director of Technology • Audie Lorenzo • Chief Business Manager • Greyson Turner • Advertising Manager • Christopher Min • Business Manager • Abigail Herbst Isiah Gatherright • Photo Illustrators • Madi Hart Malik Joseph Enna van den Akker Brynn Williams Mimi Ricanati Maggie Dant Leah Marek Kristi Seman • Staff Photographers • Connor Henning Sarah Moran Caroline Walsh Wendy Ye • Illustration Specialists • Natalie Sekicky • Adviser • \*Denotes editorial board member • The Shakerite reserves the right to reject or edit any letter to the editor. Disclaimer: Opinions expressed in The Shakerite articles are those of their respective authors, and do not represent the views of The Shakerite, Shaker Heights High School or the Shaker Heights City School District. The "Rite Idea" presents the views of the editorial board; however, it may not reflect the opinion of the entire Shakerite staff. The Shakerite is a public forum published for and by students of Shaker Heights High School. Read The Shakerite online at [shakerite.com](http://shakerite.com). Readers may reach The Shakerite at (216) 295-6210 or by emailing [shakerite@shaker.org](mailto:shakerite@shaker.org). The Shakerite is a member of the National Scholastic Press Association and the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

